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COMMUNIST INFILTRATION OF THE HOLLYWOOD  
MOTION-PICTURE INDUSTRY—PART 8

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HEARINGS  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
EIGHTY-SECOND CONGRESS  
SECOND SESSION

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MAY 19, 20, AND 21, 1952

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Printed for the use of the Committee on Un-American Activities



UNITED STATES  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE  
WASHINGTON : 1952

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UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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# COMMUNIST INFILTRATION OF THE HOLLYWOOD MOTION-PICTURE INDUSTRY—PART 8

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MONDAY, MAY 19, 1952

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES,  
*Washington, D. C.*  
PUBLIC HEARING

A subcommittee of the Committee on Un-American Activities met, pursuant to call, at 11 a. m., in room 226, Old House Office Building, Hon. John S. Wood presiding.

Committee members present: Representative John S. Wood (chairman), James B. Frazier, Jr., Harold H. Velde (appearance noted in transcript), and Bernard W. Kearney.

Staff members present: Frank S. Tavenner, Jr., counsel; Thomas W. Beale, Sr., assistant counsel; John W. Carrington, clerk; Raphael I. Nixon, research director; and A. S. Poore, editor.

Mr. WOOD. The committee will be in order. Let the record show that for purposes of this hearing I, as chairman of the committee, have set up a subcommittee consisting of Messrs. Frazier, Kearney, and Wood, who are all present.

Proceed, Mr. Tavenner.

Mr. TAVENNER. I would like to call Mr. Clifford Odets, please.

Mr. WOOD. Hold up your right hand. You do solemnly swear the evidence you will give this subcommittee shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. ODETS. I do.

## TESTIMONY OF CLIFFORD ODETS, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS COUNSEL, EUGENE GRESSMAN

Mr. WOOD. Are you represented by counsel, Mr. Odets?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, Mr. Gressman.

Mr. WOOD. Please identify yourself for the record.

Mr. GRESSMAN. Eugene Gressman, 1830 Jefferson Place NW., Washington.

Mr. WOOD. During the progress of your examination, you are at liberty to confer with your counsel at any time you may desire, to seek such information and advice from him as you want. He is at liberty to confer with you at any time.

Mr. TAVENNER. What is your name, please, sir?

Mr. ODETS. Clifford Odets.

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Odets, you appeared before the committee in executive session on April 24, 1952. The purpose of your appearance

here today is to obtain your testimony in open hearings and to question you further on matters discussed at the earlier hearings. Will you please state the time and place of your birth?

Mr. ODETS. I was born in Philadelphia, Pa., July 18, 1906.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was your formal education?

Mr. ODETS. Two years of high school, and elementary school in the Bronx, New York City.

Mr. TAVENNER. What is your occupation?

Mr. ODETS. I am a playwright and a theater director.

Mr. TAVENNER. Have you also engaged in the acting profession?

Mr. ODETS. I have in the past been an actor. I have written and directed for movies.

(Representative Harold H. Velde entered the room at this point.)

Mr. TAVENNER. Where do you now reside?

Mr. ODETS. In New York City.

Mr. TAVENNER. Where have you lived during your professional career? That is, as an actor and as a playwright and director.

Mr. ODETS. I have lived in Philadelphia, I have worked and lived in Camden, N. J.; Chester, Pa.; Hollywood, Calif.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, now, will you tell us when you went to Hollywood?

Mr. ODETS. My first visit to Hollywood was after I became a playwright, at the end of 1935. I went as a writer.

Mr. TAVENNER. And how long did you remain in Hollywood?

Mr. ODETS. I would guess at that time about 10 or 12 weeks.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you return to Hollywood at a later time?

Mr. ODETS. Yes; I have been there a number of times since.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, would you tell us as nearly as you can the periods when you were in Hollywood? At first I understood you to say it was the end of 1935.

Mr. ODETS. 1935. After that I will guess two or three excursions to Hollywood to make one picture. That would be between the years of 1936 and perhaps 1941.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the title of the picture?

Mr. ODETS. I went one time to make a picture for Paramount called Gettysburg. I went one time for United Artists to make a picture called The River Is Blue, which I did not finally write. I went at another time to write The Life of George Gershwin; and finally in 1943 I went to Hollywood for a period of slightly over 4 years.

Mr. TAVENNER. When did you leave Hollywood and return to New York?

Mr. ODETS. I will guess in 1947 and a half or 1948.

Mr. TAVENNER. And since that time how have you been employed or in what work have you been engaged?

Mr. ODETS. I have since then in New York City written and produced two plays, one of which I directed, my last one.

Mr. TAVENNER. What are their names?

Mr. ODETS. The first one was called The Big Knife, and the second one was called The Country Girl.

Mr. TAVENNER. The Big Knife was in 1948 and the Country Girl in 1951, I believe.

Mr. ODETS. I think so.

Mr. TAVENNER. When did you cease being an actor and become a playwright?

Mr. ODETS. I think this happened at the end of 1934 or the beginning of 1935, in there.

Mr. TAVENNER. So from that time until you went to Hollywood, you were engaged solely in the work of a playwright, is that correct?

Mr. ODETS. Since then, yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. What are the principal plays that were written by you after you became a playwright in 1934 or 1935?

Mr. ODETS. The first play I wrote was called *Awake and Sing*. The second two plays after that were called respectively *Waiting for Lefty* and *Till the Day I Die*.

Mr. TAVENNER. When were those plays produced?

Mr. ODETS. Those three plays were produced the early part of 1935.

Mr. TAVENNER. Are you certain that all three were produced in 1935?

Mr. ODETS. It is possible that that *Waiting for Lefty* would be produced at the end of 1934. It would be a matter of a month or two.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was your next play?

Mr. ODETS. The next play was called *Paradise Lost*.

Mr. TAVENNER. And it was produced in 1936, was it not?

Mr. ODETS. About, I guess so. I am not quite certain of the dates.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then can you give us the other plays produced by you?

Mr. ODETS. I am trying to think in chronological order again.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was the *Golden Boy* the next in order?

Mr. ODETS. I think so, yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Produced in 1937?

Mr. ODETS. I think so, yes, sir. Then after that would come *Rocket to the Moon*.

Mr. TAVENNER. In 1939?

Mr. ODETS. I think so. Or maybe a little earlier, 1938 or 1938 and a half.

Mr. TAVENNER. Prior to the production of *Rocket to the Moon*, did you write a play entitled "*Silent Partner*?"

Mr. ODETS. Yes, except that it was not produced. It was imperfectly written, therefore it was not produced.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then, after your play *Rocket to the Moon*, did you write and produce *Night Music*?

Mr. ODETS. Correct.

Mr. TAVENNER. And the date of that was in 1940, was it not?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. And what was the next after that?

Mr. ODETS. After that Billy Rose produced a play of mine called *Clash by Night*.

Mr. TAVENNER. That was in 1942?

Mr. ODETS. I think so.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then you have already made reference to your plays *The Big Knife* and *The Country Girl*. Did that compose the entire list, with the addition of the three pictures you produced in Hollywood?

Mr. ODETS. I have written more movies. Not many of them saw production, and frequently I was employed as a play doctor in Hollywood to improve other writers' scripts.

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Odets, there has been testimony before the committee that you were at one time a member of the Communist Party. Was that testimony correct?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir; it was.

Mr. TAVENNER. When were you a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. My best guess on that would be from toward the end of 1934 to the middle of 1935, covering maybe anywhere from 6 to 8 months.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you relate to the committee the circumstances under which you joined the Communist Party?

Let me put it this way: How were you recruited into the Communist Party and by whom?

Mr. ODETS. As has been testified here before, there were a number a small group, of Communist Party members in this Group Theater, of a total Group Theater membership of perhaps 35 there were four or five people who were connected with the Communist Party. Literature was passed around, and in a time of great social unrest many people found themselves reaching out for new ideas, new ways of solving depressions or making a better living, fighting for one's rights, whatever those were.

Mr. KEARNEY. What were those rights?

Mr. ODETS. Those rights would be to have steady employment.

Mr. KEARNEY. Beg your pardon?

Mr. ODETS. The rights to be steadily employed, for instance. I believe at that time there were perhaps 15 or 16 million unemployed people in the United States, and I myself was living on 10 cents a day. Therefore, I was interested in any idea which might suggest how as an actor I could function as a working actor who could make a living at a craft he had chosen for his life's work. These were the early days of the New Deal, and I don't think that one has to describe them. They were horrendous days that none of us would like to go through again.

On this basis there was a great deal of talk about amelioration of conditions, about how should one live, by what values should one work for, and in line with this there was a great deal of talk about Marxist values. One read literature; there were a lot of penny and 2-cent and 5-cent pamphlets. I read them along with a lot of other people, and finally joined the Communist Party, in the belief, in the honest and real belief, that this was some way out of the dilemma in which we found ourselves.

Does that answer your question?

Mr. TAVENNER. I think it does, except that you have not told us the exact circumstances under which you were recruited into the party. What was the process of recruitment used in your case?

Mr. ODETS. Well, it went that you read some pamphlets; you listened to some one talk, and finally a person would ask you if you didn't want to join the Communist Party. In my case it happened "No; I don't. When I am ready, I will." I was not ready that month, I was ready a month or two later.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who was the individual who made that suggestion to you?



Mr. ODETS. This would be an actor friend of mine named J. Edward Bromberg.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was he a member of the Group Theater?

Mr. ODETS. Yes; he was.

Mr. KEARNEY. Was he the actor who died a few months ago?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir; he is.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who actually recruited you into the party?

Mr. ODETS. My best memory would be that Mr. Bromberg did.

Mr. TAVENNER. When you were recruited into the party, were you assigned to a particular cell or group?

Mr. ODETS. Yes; it would be to be connected with those few people who were in the Group Theater.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who were the other persons who were members of the same cell of the Communist Party to which you were assigned?

Mr. ODETS. Well, they have been mentioned here as Lewis Leverett, a young actress named Phoebe Brand, and an actor about whom you refreshed my memory the last time I was here named Art Smith.

Mr. TAVENNER. That is Art Smith?

Mr. ODETS. And then from my reading of the New York Times a couple of other members were mentioned that I have no memory of, as I told you.

Mr. TAVENNER. Elia Kazan? Was he a member of that group?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, Mr. Kazan.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you meet with all of those persons as members of the Communist Party; that is, those you have named up to the present time?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. Tony Kraber?

Mr. ODETS. He, too.

Mr. TAVENNER. He is included in the group. Also, do you recall a person by the name of Sid Benson, also known as Ted Wellman?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir; I knew him.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was he an attendant at your Communist Party meetings in this Group Theater?

Mr. ODETS. He came in as an occasional visitor.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was he known to you as a functionary in the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. Well, I actually did not know what he did. I thought for a while he was a man who wrote newspaper articles. Then my impression became that he was some kind of party functionary.

Mr. TAVENNER. But he was not a member of the Group Theater as such?

Mr. ODETS. No, sir; he was not an actor.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did this person, Wellman or Sid Benson, ever visit in your home?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir; he did. He was a friend of mine.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, what was the occasion for his visiting in your home? Were you at that time living in the city of New York?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir; I was.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did he live in the city of New York at that time?

Mr. ODETS. Yes; he did.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you know whether or not he was subsequently transferred to the State of Tennessee?

Mr. ODETS. I think so, because one time on a long extended auto trip I did meet him in Tennessee.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did he visit your home while he was in Tennessee?

Mr. ODETS. Not that I would remember. He would visit my home when he lived in New York City.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the purpose of his visits at your home in New York?

Mr. ODETS. They were always social visits. We both were interested in music, fine classical music, records. We might go out to dinner.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did any of those visits have anything to do with his interest or his work in the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. No, sir; in no way.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you subsequently learn that he became an organizer for the Communist Party in Tennessee?

Mr. ODETS. I don't know that of my knowledge; of my own personal knowledge, I don't know that.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were you acquainted with a person by the name of Andrew Oberggaard?

Mr. ODETS. Yes; I met him.

Mr. TAVENNER. Under what circumstances did you meet him?

Mr. ODETS. In some way that I wouldn't remember. He came backstage in one of our plays. And perhaps we went out to get a bite to eat or something to drink, some coffee.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did he attend the group meetings of the Communist Party cell meetings to which you referred?

Mr. ODETS. I would guess that he was introduced to people who were connected with this group within the group, so to speak.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you recognize him as a functionary of the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. This would be my good guess.

Mr. TAVENNER. On what do you base that statement?

Mr. ODETS. Well, the Communist Party functionaries, when they are such, are always secretive. They never announce themselves as Communist Party functionaries. But they have a quality of authority, a quality of talking with knowledge, and one makes the surmise that this is some kind of functionary.

Mr. TAVENNER. And it was on the basis of that conduct on his part that your judgment was that he was a functionary of the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you recall any occasions when his advice was sought on Communist Party problems?

Mr. ODETS. I remember one such occasion. The occasion, as I think I have stated before, was we thought that actors should get rehearsal pay, which was an unheard of thing and rather a lunatic idea in those days. We wanted or perhaps we did first go to an Actors' Equity Association meeting and made no headway at all. My best memory is that we then in some way consulted with Mr. Oberggaard, who suggested certain tactical moves to make to get our proposal on the floor, and I have no memory of particular details but I do know that this small group within the Group Theater did get for every actor in the United States rehearsal pay. That is, we were the beginning of such a movement.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you know whether Oberggaard was connected with any Communist trade-union organization at that time?

Mr. ODETS. There was some such talk. It was obvious that he was a trade-union man. It was on that basis that we would have consulted with him. But what exactly it was, I am not sure.

Mr. TAVENNER. During the course of your membership in the party, were you required to make a study of Marxist literature?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir; it was a great day for literature. One read and one was supposed to read constantly.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you take up those studies in meetings of your group?

Mr. ODETS. I personally did not do too much because it was a little beyond me, and my interest was going toward writing plays. To study these matters required really months of very serious study which I did not give them.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you attend meetings where the principles of Marxism were discussed and studied?

Mr. ODETS. I never did. I personally never did that.

Mr. TAVENNER. You mean you never attended or never studied?

Mr. ODETS. I never studied in such groups. It would be a matter of taking home a newspaper or pamphlet and reading it. There were such study groups but I did not attend them.

Mr. TAVENNER. Where did you obtain the material?

Mr. ODETS. The material was bought. The material was bought at the Workers' Bookshop. Or it was given to you or bought for you by some other member.

Mr. TAVENNER. How many meetings did you attend in the group?

Mr. ODETS. I am quite certain they were very few.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were meetings held regularly?

Mr. ODETS. I think that meetings are held regularly. Let us say, for instance, once a week. And that special meetings would be called on the basis of some complaint or something that had to be fixed. I gave you what seemed to be a rather silly example of saying, "Well, we don't get clean drinking glasses around here." They would call a meeting at 10 or 11 o'clock that night to discuss that subject. I thought it was a little silly, and I refused to attend such meetings.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were any of the meetings held in your home?

Mr. ODETS. No; I don't think I had a home then. I was a very poor man.

Mr. TAVENNER. When was the period of time that Wellman was visiting you in your home?

Mr. ODETS. This would be later.

Mr. TAVENNER. How much later?

Mr. ODETS. I might think in the next 6 months or a year.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you fix the time as nearly as you can by giving us the months of the year that it may have occurred.

Mr. ODETS. That is difficult, because, because this was on and off for a number of years.

Mr. TAVENNER. Can you state the year?

Mr. ODETS. I would be guessing.

Mr. TAVENNER. Just not a guess, but your best judgment.

Mr. ODETS. Well, if I said he visited me once or twice in 1935 and then perhaps later in 1936, this would be my best judgment.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did he visit you at any time after 1936?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, a number of times.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you give us the occasion of those visits and the time, approximate time?

Mr. ODETS. I sleep very late, sometimes until 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon, because I work very late. I work frequently until 5 or 6 in the morning. So, I might get up in the afternoon and he might telephone me and say "What are you doing for dinner?" I would say, "Nothing." Come on over and we will go for a walk and go to such-and-such a restaurant." The visits would be of that sort.

Mr. TAVENNER. When, over what period of time did that take place?

Mr. ODETS. I would guess up until 1938, perhaps 1939, I don't know; quite late.

Mr. TAVENNER. 1938 or 1939?

Mr. ODETS. I would guess so.

Mr. TAVENNER. In the course of the hearing conducted by this committee regarding [William Walter] Remington, there was testimony by Mr. [Howard Allen] Bridgman that Ted Wellman was the organizer of the Communist Party for the State of Tennessee. That was at the time that Remington was employed at the Tennessee Valley Authority. And the period of time that Wellman was the State organizer of Tennessee was during this period that you say he visited you in New York, 1938 and 1939, and earlier. Do you know what Ted Wellman's business was in New York on those occasions when he visited you?

Mr. ODETS. I have no way of knowing. My best memory is that he lived in New York City. My best memory would be that around 1939, perhaps even 1940, that he lived in New York. Mind you, I cannot be exact because my memory is not that good on dates.

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Remington testified before this committee that he knew Ted Wellman and that he met him in Tennessee in the spring of 1937, and again in June of that year. Now, did he visit you during the period of 1937?

Mr. ODETS. I am sorry, I have no way of remembering that. There is no way that I can tie it up in my mind.

Mr. TAVENNER. Having met with him as a member of the Communist Party in the year of 1935, it would seem no more than logical to expect that he discussed Communist Party matters with you when he later met you and was a visitor in your home.

Mr. ODETS. I would think that the most—

Mr. TAVENNER. We would like to know about it, if that is the case.

Mr. ODETS. I always thought of him as a kind of political commentator, later, because he read every newspaper that came out. I know he wrote some kind of articles, and he gave me the impression of being, later, not a Communist Party organizer but some kind of professional political commentator. And if any politics were brought up in my house or when we met, it would be his kind of comments on what was happening in the world; that was all.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who was the leader of the group to which you were assigned, the group within the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. I don't remember any leader. As a matter of fact, I don't know that there was a leader in the sense that you used the word.



Mr. TAVENNER. Well, who would call the special meetings and act as chairman?

Mr. ODETS. I am sorry. I don't remember.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who was the treasurer of the group?

Mr. ODETS. I don't remember.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you pay dues?

Mr. ODETS. I must have.

Mr. TAVENNER. To whom did you pay them?

Mr. ODETS. My only thought would be that it was to one of these members of the group within the group, but who that was I don't remember.

Mr. TAVENNER. How much dues did you pay?

Mr. ODETS. I am sure it must have been a very slight amount, perhaps 50 cents or a dollar a week, or something of that sort.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were you required to subscribe to the Daily Worker?

Mr. ODETS. You were asked to do that, but if you were a poor actor you weren't going to pay \$10 a year for a newspaper.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you subscribe to it?

Mr. ODETS. I think maybe I did, for 3 months. You could get quarter subscriptions. That was a very expensive item.

Mr. TAVENNER. Have you made financial contributions of any character to the Daily Worker, above the subscription, above your subscription amounts?

Mr. ODETS. I don't remember—

Mr. TAVENNER. Either while you were within the party or afterward?

Mr. ODETS. I don't remember doing it for the Daily Worker, but I have been tapped, I was tapped then, from time to time, for a contribution to the New Masses. Someone might come up and say we are hard pressed, you can give us or lend us \$25 or \$50.

Mr. KEARNEY. Was this during the period of the time that you were a poor actor?

Mr. ODETS. This was during the period when I first began to make money as a playwright.

Mr. VELDE. What period was that?

Mr. ODETS. At the beginning of 1935. January, February, March of 1935.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were you a member of the Communist Party at the time you were requested to make donations to the New Masses?

Mr. ODETS. They came up frequently after that, too, and asked for donations.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you make them?

Mr. ODETS. Not to the best of my memory. I may have, but not to the best of my memory.

Mr. TAVENNER. When was the last contribution you made for New Masses?

Mr. ODETS. If I had to make a guess, it would be some time in 1935.

Mr. TAVENNER. Going back again to Ted Wellman, you told us that you visited Tennessee, and did you state that while you were there that you saw Wellman?

Mr. ODETS. I did see him, yes. I think I had.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the occasion for your visit to Tennessee?

Mr. ODETS. Well, when you come up from Mexico City, you pass through Texas and you pass through certain States, and anywhere in any State where I knew anyone, I stopped and said hello.

Mr. TAVENNER. When was this visit made?

Mr. ODETS. I would make a guess 1937 or 1938.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was Ted Wellman's occupation in Tennessee at that time, at the time you visited him?

Mr. ODETS. Well, I can't say of my own knowledge, because of my own knowledge I thought that he was some kind of newspaper writer. There was some—I forget the name of it—there was some very liberal newspaper there, with a very liberal editor. And I thought that he worked for that newspaper. In looking back now, that would be my memory of my impression at that time.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the occasion of your trip to Mexico at that time?

Mr. ODETS. I was unhappily divorcing a wife, and I wanted to go on a trip.

Mr. TAVENNER. I don't mean to inquire into your personal matters.

Mr. ODETS. No; I will tell you honestly.

Mr. TAVENNER. Have you made any financial contributions other than membership dues to the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. No memory of any such contribution. That is, since the days of 1935.

Mr. TAVENNER. How long did you remain a member of the party?

Mr. ODETS. I would say between 6 and 8 or 9 months.

Mr. TAVENNER. What were the circumstances under which you terminated your party membership?

Mr. ODETS. I was connected with what you would call or did call then, the cultural front, and it came to the point of where I thought if I can't respect these people on a so-called cultural basis, that is, let us say as literary or theater critics, I don't know what I am doing here. I remember telling you that when my plays came out one after another, they received fantastically bad notices, although a play like *Waiting for Lefty* was widely used not only by the Communists but by all liberal organizations and trade-union movements. I not only disagreed with their critical statements of my work, but I disagreed with their critical estimates of anybody's work, writers that I didn't know, as I mentioned, like Steinbeck and Hemingway. I had a great number of fights about that. And I simply thought this is not for me, there is no reason for me to be mixed up in there; I am a playwright; I have established myself as a playwright; I have a great deal of work to do; I have enough to say out of my own mind and heart, and I had better leave. This would be the general attitude under which I left.

Mr. TAVENNER. Can you be specific as to the month of the year in which you left the party?

Mr. ODETS. I am sorry, I can't. Well, I would guess it was somewhere in the latter half of 1935.

Mr. TAVENNER. During the time of your affiliation with the Communist Party, did you engage in any special activity for the party?

Mr. ODETS. None that I remember, no.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you recall having been made chairman of the American Commission to Investigate Labor and Social Conditions in Cuba?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir, I distinctly remember that.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, did you make a trip to Cuba as a member of that commission?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, that was in June of 1935.

Mr. TAVENNER. According to the information in the files of the committee, this commission was composed of yourself as chairman, representing the League of American Writers. That is correct, is it not?

Mr. ODETS. I did not have that memory of it until you mentioned it the last time. It is correct, I know that now.

Mr. TAVENNER. And that the other members of the Commission of which you were the chairman were Fred L. Gordo, secretary, representing the League of American Writers; also, Manning Johnson of the Food Workers Industrial Union; Herman Reissig, of the American League Against War and Fascism; Mary Gruber, also of the American League Against War and Fascism; Celeste Strack of the National Students League; Elsa Waldman of the National Students League; Paul Crosbie, of the American League of Ex-Servicemen; Lucille Perry, of the Provisional Committee for Cuba; Dora Zucker of International Ladies' Garment Workers Union; Conrad Komorowski, of the All American Anti-Imperialist League; Paul Irving of the Unemployed Teachers Association; Jose Santag, representing 13 Latin-American organizations in New York; Mason Shaffer, of the International Workers' Order; and Frank Griffin of the International Labor Defense.

Did you know any of these people before you made the trip to Cuba with them?

Mr. ODETS. No, sir; not one of them.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you know any of them to be members of the Communist Party or did you discover their membership in the Communist Party while on your trip to Cuba or in a subsequent period?

Mr. ODETS. I would say on the boat I discovered that some of them were members of the Communist Party. Some of the names, I just wrote them down, and you did mention them the last time. I actually right now do not remember but about half of these people. I am hard put to place in my mind who some of these others were. But I would guess that the number of these persons were certain members of the Communist Party.

Mr. TAVENNER. Can you tell us which of them were members of the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. Well, I am going to guess that Komorowski was. I am going to guess that Manning Johnson was. I am going to guess that Celeste Strack was. And that is where I shall have to stop.

Mr. TAVENNER. How was this commission chosen?

Mr. WOOD. Mr. Counsel, I do not think we should leave the record in that condition, unless the witness has some knowledge about it. The fact that he said he would guess at it, the record ought to be clarified on the three names that were mentioned. I do not think the committee would want it to stand in that condition. See if you can clarify that. If not, there is the mere fact that he is guessing.

Mr. KEARNEY. Do you know as a matter of fact that any of the three names that you mentioned were members of the Communist Party and, if so, you can name them.

Mr. ODETS. I beg your pardon.

Mr. KEARNEY. Read the question.

(The pending question was read by the official reporter.)

Mr. ODETS. I should think that Komorowski was a member of the Communist Party, definitely.

Mr. KEARNEY. When you say you should think that Komorowski was a member of the Communist Party, upon what do you base that assumption?

Mr. ODETS. I was only nominally the chairman of this committee. When I got on the boat and the committee started for Cuba, I discovered, should I say to my disgust, that this man actually was the expert and I was the idealist, so to speak, that was connected. I was the idealist who had some kind of publicity value and he was the expert on Latin-American affairs. He spoke with such authority and such knowledge that I simply supposed that he was, if there were other Communist Party delegates on this committee, that he was the top one.

Mr. KEARNEY. You mean that he spoke with such authority on Communist affairs?

Mr. ODETS. I would put it that way.

Mr. KEARNEY. Did he ever tell you that he was a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. No; they never do.

Mr. KEARNEY. What else transpired on the voyage from New York to Cuba that would lead you to believe that this individual was a member of the Communist Party? Did you discuss with him Communist Party affairs?

Mr. ODETS. No, but there were, what I should call tactical discussions, what do you do when you get there, what happens, what kind of statements shall one give the press. And since this man led the discussion, since this man planned the tactics, I would say that he was a Communist Party member and was really the head of the delegation.

Mr. KEARNEY. What do you mean by planning tactics? Do you mean Communist Party tactics?

Mr. ODETS. No; I mean in relation to this particular expedition, let's call it, this particular junket. I was, for instance, astonished to learn on the boat that when we got to Cuba we were going to be arrested. This was news to me. I didn't know anything about that, to make an example. So there would be a meeting on what do we do when we get arrested. And this was the man who seemed to know what we do.

Mr. KEARNEY. You were advised you were to be arrested. Did they tell you what you were to be arrested for? On what grounds?

Mr. ODETS. What grounds? Well, the grounds were that we were persona non grata in Cuba at that time.

Mr. KEARNEY. That covers a lot of grounds, does it not?

Mr. ODETS. That is kind of what happened.

Mr. KEARNEY. Were you accused directly of being members of the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. The delegation was being accused of being a Communist delegation, and the inception of the delegation, when it was brought to my attention, was that it was a broad front delegation.



If I am not mistaken, this was the time of the United Front, this was the time when the Communist Party tried to work with all other liberal and left groups. Actually, there were a lot of people on this delegation who in my opinion had nothing to do with Communists or communism.

Mr. KEARNEY. Were you arrested or were the members of the delegation arrested by the Cuban authorities?

Mr. ODETS. We were promptly arrested and promptly lined up and marched to jail.

Mr. KEARNEY. Were you asked whether you were members of the Communist Party or not by the police of Cuba?

Mr. ODETS. No, sir; we were not asking anything. We were not told anything and not asked. We were just arrested.

Mr. KEARNEY. Arrested and put in jail. Were there any charges placed against you?

Mr. ODETS. No. We were held incommunicado except for a phone call or two for about 24 hours and to see the American consul. And then I asked him with a great deal of honest indignation why we were arrested, what this was about, and it had—

Mr. KEARNEY. Pardon me for interrupting, but was this the time that you yourself were a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. I might have been. Yes, I was.

Mr. KEARNEY. That was the time that you asked with honest indignation what it was all about?

Mr. ODETS. I believe the indignation was honest, sir. I went there as a citizen of the United States. I didn't go there as a Communist Party member.

Mr. KEARNEY. I inferred from your answers that the group was arrested because they were members of the Communist Party.

Mr. ODETS. We weren't told why we were arrested. As a matter of fact, after reading the newspaper when I got back to New York City, because I couldn't read the Spanish newspapers, I learned that that is why we had been arrested. I, of course, suspected—I am not going to be naïve—I suspected that that is why we were arrested.

Mr. KEARNEY. Did you see the American consul or talk with him?

Mr. ODETS. I saw him one time, and he said very coyly, "You know, you know." A very coy gentleman.

Mr. KEARNEY. And you were held there for 24 hours?

Mr. ODETS. Twenty-four or 36, something like that.

Mr. KEARNEY. What happened after that?

Mr. ODETS. Then we were very carefully marched back to another boat going back to New York and we were on our way back to New York. It was not a pleasant experience.

Mr. KEARNEY. I should not think so.

Mr. TAVENNER. You later found out that the person originally selected to act as chairman of this commission was Mother Bloor, did you not?

Mr. ODETS. That is correct.

Mr. TAVENNER. And why was it that Mother Bloor did not go through with the assignment, or the proposed assignment?

Mr. ODETS. Well, when I got back I had a real indignation because I thought that if one went down there on the basis of saying there is a horrible, repressive movement here against intellectuals and col-

lege students, that one should fight out on that line. If you believed that. It was not simply a tactic to get your name in the newspaper or a tactic to get some newspaper space, but you really should fight about that. When the arrest took place the whole matter seemed to be dropped. So I, simply on that matter, I went back to New York with a great deal of indignation, talked really to very few members of the delegation going back on the boat, and later, I can't remember whom, but spoke to someone in New York and was rather aroused by this idea that we had been manhandled, because we were, and I was indignant because no one seemed to make a fight about that. During this time I also said it was very dangerous, which it was, because there were dozens of secret police there with machine guns, some of them dressed as dock workers in overalls. I said it was a very dangerous matter and they said, "Yes, it was so dangerous that we had originally intended to send Mother Bloor down as head of the delegation but it was so dangerous we didn't send her." She was an old lady.

Mr. KEARNEY. They sent you down as chairman instead of Mother Bloor?

Mr. ODETS. So I said he might have at least told me this and given me the chance to decide whether I wanted to face machine guns.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who was it that told you that it had been the decision to send Mother Bloor?

Mr. ODETS. I don't know. Somebody that came to see me or I visited, I don't know.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was it the same person that designated you as chairman in the first instance?

Mr. ODETS. I don't remember who that was.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was it a Communist Party functionary who was giving this explanation?

Mr. ODETS. I will guess it had to be. But who that was, I honestly can't remember.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, actually, this was nothing more than a Communist Party idea to send this commission to Cuba for its own propaganda purposes?

Mr. ODETS. Well, today, with a little more sophistication, I would say so.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, Manning Johnson, to whom you referred as a person that you guessed was a member of the Communist Party, testified before this committee and admitted his former Communist Party membership, and in the course of his testimony he stated:

I was secretary of the American Commission to Cuba and I was sent to Cuba to help the revolutionary forces there.

I might say from the point of view of background that Cuba at that time was in a state of revolution. They had overthrown the government of Machado and the Mendieta-Batista revolutionary junta had come into power. We were assigned to tour the islands and assist the Communist forces to overthrow this Mendieta-Batista junta and put in power Grau San Martin and his group. They considered the Grau San Martin government would be a government that would permit Communists to operate openly. That is all I can recall at the present time. But I do know we were thrown in jail down there and I never will forget the experience.

Mr. VELDE. Referring to your guess that Celeste Strack, I believe it was, was a member of the Communist Party. On what do you base it, on what facts do you base your guess?

Mr. ODETS. As a matter of fact, quick, smart girl. Knew how to move tactically.

Mr. VELDE. Are all smart, quick people Communist Party members?

Mr. ODETS. Well, there is a certain kind of professionalism. There is a certain kind of professionalism in certain situations. I must admit I never had it, and that was why this whole delegation was taken over by other people. I knew nothing about that. I was naive, I didn't even know what we were going into. So my guess about her comes from simply her tactical smartness.

Mr. VELDE. And you had a conversation or several conversations with her, I suppose, on the trip?

Mr. ODETS. Yes.

Mr. VELDE. Did she ever mention that she was a member?

Mr. ODETS. They do not.

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Odets, will you tell the committee just how this commission was created, and the circumstances, and more about the circumstances, under which you were designated as chairman?

Mr. ODETS. I listened very carefully to what you read there, the statement of Manning Johnson. He is talking awfully big. He is talking awfully big in a sense that 8 or 10 or whatever the number is left and liberal people from New York City could go down to Cuba and change the course of this horrible Cuban revolution. This is very big talk. If we were going to do what Mr. Johnson said, we certainly should not have announced in a public press that we were all getting on a boat and going down there to make a fuss. So my simple point is that the point of the mission could not have been what he said, that we were going to go in and take over anything, or contact anyone. I suppose in the matter of common sense if you would contact anybody in Cuba, that you would go down there silently and slip in.

Mr. VELDE. What was your purpose in going to Cuba on this mission?

Mr. ODETS. The purpose that attracted me was that there were fears, oppressive measures taken against thousands of intellectuals and college students. They were thrown into jail, under the previous Machado regime, which was a horrible regime. I then was glad to go down in the sense of, if nothing else did happen, we would dramatize what the issues were down there. Of course, the stories that were coming out were very garbled. No one knew what was happening. As a matter of fact, I frankly think that later the American Embassy straightened out the whole thing and was a salutary and moderating influence on the situation.

Mr. WOOD. What did you propose to do about it when you went down there? What did you have in your mind, what was your purpose in going?

Mr. ODETS. I would guess, sir, that our arrival would encourage and hearten certain sections of the Cuban people in the sense of saying, you see, here are people from the United States who are interested in you and your problems and your employment. That, I would guess, would be the best point, the best point of such a delegation.

Mr. WOOD. Did you have a plan or a program as to the course of conduct when you got there?

Mr. ODETS. Well, to my surprise, as I said before, the plan was that we were going to get arrested, which I did not know about. I must



admit I was—let me admit I was politically extremely naive, and I remember distinctly the night before the boat docked, which was a festive occasion on an excursion boat, we were called together and told, I believe by Komorowski, that this is what was going to happen.

MR. TAVENNER. You found that you were not in command of your own commission but that Komorowski was?

MR. ODETS. Yes, sir.

MR. TAVENNER. And that it was known that you were to be arrested before you reached Cuba, and that was part of the plan?

MR. ODETS. I will say this, sir. Evidently a lot of these people had far more background than I did in political scuffling, and they knew that that was going to happen. I didn't know. It was particularly in that sense that I meant I was politically naive.

MR. TAVENNER. Then if it was planned that your group should be arrested, I mean part of the plans of your commission, then this was nothing more than a propaganda stunt, isn't that true?

MR. ODETS. It finally turned out that way. It finally turned out the way you say.

MR. KEARNEY. In the parlance of everyday language, you were known as the fall guy, is that it?

MR. ODETS. A little bit. A little bit.

MR. VELDE. Do you know whether Komorowski had definite knowledge that you were going to be arrested?

MR. ODETS. He simply seemed to have sufficient political background to know that that was what was going to happen. And he had that much grace to say the night before the boat lands to be prepared for this.

MR. VELDE. Did he tell you that? Is that the way you learned about it?

MR. ODETS. That would be the substance of what he said, and that was certainly the way I learned about it.

MR. TAVENNER. Now, you have spoken several times of being rather naive in political matters yourself, and others such as Komorowski being experienced. You are actually referring there to experience in Communist Party tactics, aren't you? You are not speaking of experience in the broad field of politics, but you are speaking of Komorowski's Communist Party tactics and experience?

MR. ODETS. I am actually speaking of both, of both. There are Communist Party tactics which are exclusively their own and my knowledge would be that there are Communist Party tactics which are shared typically by many politicians, because they are also politicians. They would also be versed in the tactics of solidifying trade-unionism, which is again shared by many non-Communist trade-unionists. There is simply professional know-how in all of those things.

MR. TAVENNER. You have told us about your experience when you returned, and you met a person who you judged to be a functionary of the Communist Party who told you that the plan originally was to send someone else as chairman of the commission. Was that the same person who placed you on this commission to begin with, or suggested to you that you accept such a position?

MR. ODETS. It is possible, but I can't remember. It is possible, but I actually can't remember.

(At this point Representative Harold H. Velde left the hearing room.)

Mr. TAVENNER. Where was it that you met this individual?

Mr. ODETS. That I don't remember, either.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, as chairman of this committee, did you make a report to anyone on your return to the United States?

Mr. ODETS. Whoever this person was, the extent of my report I have told you. I was quite indignant about how routinely, how cut and dried the matter seemed. I was told that they knew in advance that it was going to be dangerous, and I made some statement about the very disgraceful conduct of one of the members of the delegation. I told you about that the last time.

Mr. KEARNEY. Were you indignant about the actions of the Cuban police or the actions of the Communist Party for leading you into such a situation?

Mr. ODETS. It was a 50-50 matter. I was indignant with the thing myself and indignant that a really, let my say, idealistic fight was not being made about this matter. I couldn't see it as a cut and dried matter, you do something and then you turn your back on it.

Mr. KEARNEY. Your resentment was not directed against the Communist Party for, let us say, leading you into such a trap, but it was directed equally against the Cuban police and the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir.

Mr. WOOD. Did I understand you to say, Mr. Odets, that when you returned from that junket that you made a report to somebody that you don't now remember?

Mr. ODETS. There was someone I spoke to, and I would not say it was a formal report, because that would have been——

Mr. WOOD. Mr. Odets, who procured you to go?

Mr. ODETS. I don't remember that.

Mr. WOOD. Who paid your expenses?

Mr. ODETS. I paid my own expenses.

Mr. WOOD. Did you get it back?

Mr. ODETS. No, on this idealistic swing I wouldn't think of taking any expenses, I would pay my own. I am certain I paid my own expenses.

Mr. WOOD. You don't recall now who procured you to go?

Mr. ODETS. No. I know I was approached by someone and asked about it. I was anxious to get out of the country, I was anxious to take a trip. It was a beautiful trip on the water. My mother had just died 3 or 4 weeks before and I went.

Mr. WOOD. It seems so strange to me that you would make a trip of that significance at the behest of some individual, and come back from the trip after having that experience and make a report to that individual, and now you can't recall who it was.

Mr. ODETS. I would be glad to say so, if I did remember, but I don't.

Mr. FRAZIER. Who were you supposed to contact when you reached Cuba?

Mr. ODETS. We had some letters to various college professors and students. There was a packet of letters, and when the police boarded the ship these letters were scuttled, they were torn up and thrown overboard.

Mr. FRAZIER. Who were these letters from?

Mr. ODETS. They would be from people in the United States, I don't know.

Mr. FRAZIER. Who gave you the letters?

Mr. ODETS. I didn't have them, Komorowski had them. But I remember they were passed like a hot plate from one to the other. The police were in earnest boarding that ship with machine guns, and passed around and it got to be like a scene from a Charlie Chaplin movie. They were torn up and thrown overboard. I just remembered that for the first time.

Mr. FRAZIER. So you didn't know who you were going down there to see?

Mr. ODETS. No; I didn't know.

Mr. FRAZIER. Yet you were chairman of the committee.

Mr. ODETS. I was the nominal chairman. I wouldn't let that happen today, let me say so.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you write any articles for publication about the trip to Cuba?

Mr. ODETS. Yes; I wrote an article for the New York Evening Post. I was also an accredited correspondent for the New York Evening Post on that trip. And my memory is that I wrote some lengthy article for them.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you recall any other articles written by you?

Mr. ODETS. It is possible there was a pamphlet written by two or three persons, of which I was one.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who were the other persons who assisted in the writing?

Mr. ODETS. I am going to guess a very interesting man named Carleton Beals.

Mr. TAVENNER. Give us the name.

Mr. ODETS. Carleton Beals.

Mr. TAVENNER. Carleton Beals.

Mr. ODETS. He was not a Communist, but he was a fighting liberal and a very interesting man.

Mr. TAVENNER. I hand you a pamphlet entitled "Rifle Rule in Cuba," by Carleton Beals and Clifford Odets.

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir; that is it. That is more than I had in my files.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you write that part of the pamphlet that you see on page 11, beginning at page 11?

Mr. ODETS. I must tell you honestly that I don't know if I did. I know I wrote the New York Post article. I don't know.

Mr. KEARNEY. When the witness has finished with that, will you let me see it, please?

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes, sir.

At the conclusion, at the end of the pamphlet is a report entitled "Report of the American Commission to Investigate Labor and Social Conditions in Cuba." At the end of which appears the name "American Commission to Investigate Labor and Social Conditions in Cuba, Clifford Odets, chairman, Manning Johnson, secretary," and giving the names of the other members of it. On page 31, which is the last page, is this statement:

The provisional committee for Cuba was organized precisely for the task of unifying the efforts of the American people for assistance in the struggle of the Cuban people for freedom. It is especially vital that the American people help, for the way to freedom is barred primarily by American imperialist domination of Cuba.

Did you write that?

Mr. ODETS. No, I certainly did not write that. I know some of the facts about that situation, but I didn't write that.

Mr. TAVENNER. As chairman of the committee, which put out that report over your name, weren't you aware of that language and didn't you approve it?

Mr. ODETS. I see here that it says Clifford Odets, chairman of the commission, has written a story of what happened to the commission in Cuba. Here we want to present only your conclusions. So it is quite apparent to me that I didn't write that. But after, what I am reputed to have written, there is this extra statement by some executive committee.

Mr. TAVENNER. You recognize fully at this time, do you not, that this was all a part of the Communist Party propaganda, that it was embarking upon at that time?

Mr. ODETS. Except that I still right now don't know that this was exclusively a Communist affair. For instance, I am almost certain that Carleton Beals is not and was not a Communist.

Mr. TAVENNER. But the Communist Party is well known for the manner in which it uses other people.

Mr. WOOD. Was Carleton Beals on the mission with you?

Mr. ODETS. No, sir; he was not.

Mr. WOOD. Mr. Odets, who got you out of jail?

Mr. ODETS. I can give you my guess about that.

Mr. WOOD. Do you know?

Mr. ODETS. No, sir.

Mr. WOOD. The door just opened and you were turned out?

Mr. ODETS. Pardon?

Mr. WOOD. Did they open the doors and turn you out?

Mr. ODETS. No; they very carefully waited until another ship was ready and carefully under guard marched us on the ship, put us on the ship and said don't come back again. I said we will come back and I will bring people you can't touch. I will bring famous liberals in New York. And that is what I wanted to do. But that never happened.

Mr. WOOD. Was there ever any formal charge made against you while you were in jail?

Mr. ODETS. None.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you recall having written any other articles relating to a commission to Cuba?

Mr. ODETS. As I say, the one in the New York Evening Post.

Mr. TAVENNER. I mean in addition to those you have named.

Mr. ODETS. I may have, but I don't remember them.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you recall writing an article for New Masses on the subject?

Mr. ODETS. No; I don't.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you a photostatic copy of an issue of New Masses for July 16, 1935, where there appears an article entitled "What Happened to Us in Cuba," by Clifford Odets. Will you examine it, please, and state whether or not you wrote it?

Mr. ODETS. This one, I know I wrote. When I read it, I recognize my style.

Mr. TAVENNER. What were the circumstances under which you wrote that article for New Masses?



Mr. ODETS. Well, I could only write this if I were asked to, and I must have been asked to.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who was the person that asked you to write that article for New Masses?

Mr. ODETS. I don't know, but I would guess it would be one of the editors of New Masses. I knew a little at that time, a man named Joe North, and it might have been Joe North who came up. I don't quite remember.

Mr. TAVENNER. In the article you summed up your adventure in Cuba in part as follows:

This impartial commission of investigation has shown its uncertainty of purpose by being honored by deportation by the present Cuban military dictatorship in collusion with the American Embassy officials. Their collusion is clearly marked out by their negative response to our call for help.

I am interested in the term used in referring to your commission as an impartial commission of investigation. Are you now of the opinion that this commission which was in fact headed by Komorowski, though you were used as a cover for it, was actually an impartial commission?

Mr. ODETS. I would say that although it had all sorts of left and liberal elements in it, that I would say now that the commission was definitely slanted, Communist Party slanted.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, it was Communist Party controlled under the de facto leadership of Komorowski, wasn't it?

Mr. ODETS. They don't quite do it that way, sir. There is always a certain, what I call a democratic procedure. Things are put to a vote. The only thing is that it doesn't help to put things to a vote and they have the know-how and you don't have the know-how.

Mr. TAVENNER. It was the equivalent of telling you what to do, was it not?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, you who didn't have the know-how, so you had to rely upon people that did.

Mr. KEARNEY. Mr. Odets, I just hastily scanned your article in the pamphlet entitled "Rifle Rule in Cuba," by Carleton Beals and Clifford Odets, your article headed "Machine-Gun Reception." Some few minutes ago you testified as to your indignant feeling against the Communist Party which was divided 50-50 against the police for the manner in which you were treated. I can see in this article over your name the indignant manner in which you write concerning your treatment by the Cuban police. But I fail to see any indignant protest of yours in this article, the manner in which the Communist Party used you, as I said some time ago, as a fall guy. If there is, I wish you would point it out to me.

Mr. ODETS. All that happened there was that I simply didn't know about this all until later. I had no realization of it and did not really know what happened. When it did happen, I moved out of the Communist Party.

Mr. KEARNEY. After you found out about it, did you make any effort to change your statement?

Mr. ODETS. No, I made no effort to change my statement. I should think it would have been much too late.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did I understand you to say when you discovered the real facts relating to the mission to Cuba that you withdrew from the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. A short time after.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, did this experience have any motivating effect upon your decision, to either stay in or get out of the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. I would say it had considerable effect on my decision. I must admit frankly I resented the professionalism. I thought, let me say it this way, in a certain moral and idealistic level, and I resented the professionalism of the cut and dried way in which this was done. I simply said this is not for me, I am not a professional businessman, my business is writing plays and I better get out of this. I don't want to be used. And if this is an example, the expedition was largely responsible for me leaving the Communist Party.

Mr. KEARNEY. But that article was written before you left the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. I guess so.

Mr. TAVENNER. When did you return from Cuba?

Mr. ODETS. I guess this all happened in June of 1935—June or maybe early July.

Mr. TAVENNER. Does that aid you in any way in stating just what month it was that you left the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. Well, I will say again to the best of my knowledge it would be in the latter half of 1935, the year 1935.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you advise anyone in writing or verbally of your intention to withdraw from the party?

Mr. ODETS. I must have, but I don't remember it.

Mr. WOOD. The committee will stand in recess until half-past two.

(Whereupon, at 12:20 p. m., the hearing was recessed until 2:30 p. m. the same day.)

#### AFTERNOON SESSION

(The subcommittee reconvened at 3:10 p. m., with Representatives John S. Wood, chairman, and James B. Frazier, Jr., being present.)

Mr. WOOD. Come to order, please.

Are you ready to proceed?

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes, sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. I would like at this point to have made a part of the record information contained in the files, that is, in the files of the committee, regarding several of those who participated as members of the American Commission To Investigate Labor and Social Conditions in Cuba.

Jose Santiago, as shown by the committee files, was a candidate for the State assembly for the Seventeenth District of New York County on the Communist Party ticket, according to the Daily Worker of November 2, 1936, at page 5.

Frank Griffin was a candidate for district attorney, Kings County, on the Communist Party ticket, according to the Daily Worker of October 19, 1935, at page 5.

Celeste Strack was a candidate on the Communist Party ticket for nomination to the office of Representative to Congress from the Thirteenth Congressional District for Los Angeles County, in 1940.

Mr. Odets, in your earlier testimony before the committee, you referred to the manner in which your plays had been received by the Communist Party in the nature of the criticism which you said your

plays received. I recall that you stated that your play, *Waiting for Lefty*, was referred to as a Trotskyite production, and that that was one of the reasons that impelled you to fall out with the Communist Party.

You have stated today in your testimony that the criticisms that your productions received from the Communist press were instrumental in your taking the stand, and finally determining that you would break with the Communist Party. In our examination of the Communist press, we have been unable to find any statement that your play, *Waiting for Lefty*, was ever referred to by way of criticism as a Trotskyite play. You stated that you thought you had a clipping that would so indicate.

MR. ODETS. Yes, Mr. Tavenner. When I left Washington the last time I was here I went through my press clipping books and found a number—in fact, I found for every play that I produced very bad critical reception from the left. So, as of two or three nights ago, I copied some of these out in my own handwriting, on a pad, and brought them along. I found that the phrase “Trotskyite tendencies” had been marked down as left tendencies, that I had better be careful of left tendencies, which in those days meant that one had better be careful not to be a Trotskyite.

MR. TAVENNER. In other words, it was your interpretation that the criticism meant Trotskyite although there was no actual reference to Trotskyite?

MR. ODETS. There was a rather amusing detail. One of the papers was Yiddish, from a paper called the *Daily Freiheit*, which was or is, I don't know whether the paper is still in existence, which is the Yiddish *Daily Worker*. My memory would be in that, in the translation of that, the actual phrase Trotskyite was used.

MR. TAVENNER. You spoke of the severity of the criticisms. The criticisms that you referred to were criticisms of a technical character regarding your plays, were they not, as distinguished from the criticism of your ability and your skill in portraying the characters?

MR. ODETS. Well, I would like to ask this, if I may: I would like to read you a few of them, and put a few of them in the record by reading them, and then let you make your own judgment of those. I think that they are generally all around very bad notices.

MR. TAVENNER. You say generally bad. Was there a period of time in which the Communist press seemed to change its attitude regarding your plays?

MR. ODETS. Well, I can only say that from the very first play, from *Waiting for Lefty*, on until my plays of a year ago, the criticisms were sometimes good and sometimes bad, shockingly bad. I mean, I dislike being called a hack writer, but my last play I was called a hack writer in the *Daily Worker*. I don't know how you would categorize this sort of criticism but I call it very severe and very shocking.

MR. TAVENNER. What was the purpose of the criticism, do you know?

MR. ODETS. The purpose, I would think, would be to say “This man has gone off the track and while he has talent and we mourn his loss,” so to speak, “we wish we could get him back.”

MR. TAVENNER. Did it also take on the character of a challenge to you to produce more plays depicting the strike episode as in your play “*Waiting for Lefty*.”



Mr. ODETS. That was in the beginning it was suggested to me in casual meetings, nothing formal. It was suggested that I produce or write another strike play.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who suggested that?

Mr. ODETS. Well, the suggestion was so general among the Communist friends that I had that I couldn't really localize it to one person.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did that go beyond the cell of the Communist Party of which you were a member?

Mr. ODETS. I should think that I might meet people in the theater and they would say "When are you going to write another play like *Waiting for Lefty*. We need more strike plays, more plays that stand up in terms of those subjects." But as I say, the matter was so general that I would find difficulty in localizing it. However, in the reviews, what they were griping about I think might become more evident if I were permitted to read you a few of them. They are just a matter of a few lines each.

Mr. TAVENNER. Let us come to that in a few minutes. Before coming to that, I would like to make a few more general inquiries. Did you have the feeling, or gain the impression, that the type of criticism which your plays received through the Communist press constituted an effort on the part of the Communist Party to direct you in your course of writing, or to influence you in your course of writing, that is, as to what you should write about and how you should treat your subjects and what kind of a social message you should carry, particularly.

Mr. ODETS. I would say that some of the criticisms were open to that interpretation. But most of them took me to task for what they called my defections. It would be expressed that way. "It is a pity that this man is wasting his time about this trifling subject matter when he could be writing, let us say, about the American workers, when he could be writing about the war in Spain. Why is he writing about a dentist in an office"?

Mr. TAVENNER. When you speak of a dentist in an office, you are speaking of your later production of—

Mr. ODETS. *A Rocket to the Moon*.

Mr. TAVENNER. *A Rocket to the Moon*. That was in—

Mr. ODETS. Two or three years after.

Mr. TAVENNER. 1939. Now, coming back to the time when you were in the party, because you were in the party when you wrote *Waiting for Lefty*, were you not?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir; I was.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were you in the party at the time you wrote the earlier production *Awake and Sing*?

Mr. ODETS. No, I was not, even though it was produced at the time I was in the party. It was written maybe a year and a half before.

Mr. TAVENNER. Which was produced first?

Mr. ODETS. Well, it twists a little bit. *Awake and Sing* was written and no one wanted to do it. Then I wrote *Waiting for Lefty*, which was very successful. It was produced. And then other people wanted to do *Awake and Sing*. So *Awake and Sing* was produced second.

Mr. TAVENNER. During the period of your membership in the Communist Party did you meet and associate with functionaries of the Communist Party who were interested particularly in the cultural activities of the party, other than members of your own cell?

MR. ODETS. Well, the few people that I did meet were people on the cultural front, as I have said before, like V. J. Jerome, a few people like that.

MR. TAVENNER. Well, who, specifically?

MR. ODETS. Well, there was Mr. Jerome. I might meet occasionally a drama critic of the Daily Worker.

MR. TAVENNER. Who was that?

MR. ODETS. A man named Nathaniel Buchwald. He wrote, I must say, really scurrilous reviews of my plays. I don't know why.

MR. TAVENNER. Any others?

MR. ODETS. I undoubtedly met at that time an editor or two of the New Masses, Joe North.

MR. TAVENNER. Michael Blankfort was one of the reviewers, I believe, at that particular time, of the New Masses, and I believe he was also with the Daily Worker part time. Were you acquainted with Michael Blankfort?

MR. ODETS. I knew him vaguely. But I didn't like him. That is because he was a budding playwright, too, I think. He wrote scurrilously of my plays.

MR. TAVENNER. Well, he placed you highly, too, didn't he?

MR. ODETS. Well, when he had to he did. But when he could get away from it, he didn't. As I said before, there was not always unanimity of opinion, so that a play of mine might be reviewed very badly and then someone else on the left would say "Just a minute, this play is much better than you put in New Masses, so you must let me write a second article."

MR. TAVENNER. Can you assign any reason for that change of attitude?

MR. ODETS. No, sir. I am sure they wanted to keep me there. They would have liked to have had me write what they would call, with quotes around the word, "progressive plays." They would like me to write plays on what themes they would think would be burning issues of the day. I am sure, for instance, the Communist Party thought that the war in Spain was a burning issue of the day. I think a great number of liberals did, too.

MR. TAVENNER. And they attempted to direct you in that course of writing?

MR. ODETS. In the sense, sir, of saying, "This man is wasting his time. He is stupid, he has too much talent. He is wasting his time writing about ordinary, middle-class life when he could be writing a glorious play about the war in Spain." It was in that sense that they would try to influence one, chiefly in that sense.

MR. TAVENNER. Well, did you follow the suggestion which you received by way of criticism through the Communist press, and other ways?

MR. ODETS. I am afraid I never did.

MR. TAVENNER. Why?

MR. ODETS. I didn't believe it. I didn't respect any person or any party or any group of people who would say to a young creative writer "Go outside of your experience and write outside of your experience a play."

I knew that as fumbling as my beginnings were, and they certainly were, that I could only write out of my own experience, out of my own incentive. I couldn't be given a theme and handle it. It was



not my business. It meant to me, if I may say it this way, a loss of integrity. And so I persisted in going along on my own line and saying and writing what did come out of my true center. And whenever this happened, I got this violent opposition in that press and I became further disgusted and estranged from them.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then that was an effort on the part of the Communist Party to dictate to you what you should write about and how you should treat your subject?

Mr. ODETS. I would say so.

Mr. TAVENNER. And, if I understand you correctly, you rebelled against that type of Communist Party discipline.

Mr. ODETS. I did. I did except that they had no ties on me so that I could rebel from the ties. By then I had, so to speak, loosened these ties, and I had no connection with them. So one read what they said as one read other criticisms, as you read the review in the New York Times or the morning Herald Tribune. If one could learn something from it, that was fine. If you couldn't learn something from it, there was nothing there for you. Since I had made up my mind there was nothing I could learn from the left cultural fronts I didn't pay much attention to it. I was much more apt to be interested in what a critic like Stark Young would say in the New Republic or Brooks Atkinson in the New York Times.

Mr. TAVENNER. If I understand you correctly, the Communist Party had its own methods of thought control in dealing with the writers who were members of the Communist Party.

Mr. ODETS. You may say so, sir. They tried that, but they drove all of the good writers away. They drove every first-grade writer away. This is what finally happened, this was finally the result. So far as I know offhand they don't have a first-grade writer connected with them, and they haven't for years, because of these tactics.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now let us return at this point to the criticisms of your plays because it is rather difficult to follow those criticisms. At times the reviewers praised your works very highly. At other times they criticized, usually in matters of form, according to my study of them. But let us have the instances in which you state that there was a criticism of a severe type.

Mr. ODETS. Well, here is one—may I go ahead?

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes.

Mr. ODETS. Here is one from the Daily Worker review of the Waiting for Lefty production in February of 1935, by Nathaniel Buchwald:

The very gush of his dramatic say has resulted in a woeful looseness of play structure and its strident overtones all but vitiate his message \* \* \* exhortations which now and then deteriorate into mere sloganism or rhetoric \* \* \* though each episode is eloquent in itself, all of them put together fail to make a play.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who was the reviewer?

Mr. ODETS. That was Nathaniel Buchwald. That was the original production of Waiting for Lefty. He said some other good things. He said I had talent.

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes, and he says in that very review of—what was the date that you gave?

Mr. ODETS. All I have is February 1935.

Mr. TAVENNER. February 3?

Mr. ODETS. I just have February 1935.

Mr. TAVENNER. At page 3, did you say?

Mr. ODETS. I didn't mention the pages.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, at page 5, February 20, 1935—well, at any rate, that is February of 1935. When was the play produced?

Mr. ODETS. I would think that this was a review of the first production of it.

Mr. TAVENNER. And when was the first production?

Mr. ODETS. Well, I would say from this date it was some time early in February of 1935.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, now, the same reviewer, in the issue of January 12, 1935, which is some time earlier than the one you referred to, had this to say:

Propelled by his burning revolutionary fervor, and by an essentially clear guiding idea, this young playwright swept the audience off its feet by the sheer power and sincerity of dramatic utterance which was amplified and given vibrant resonance by the magnificent performance of the Group Theater players.

In the issue of January 5, 1935, the same reviewer, that is Nathaniel Buchwald, does criticize certain technical matters which he set forth, but he also says this. He concedes that Odets will learn and that he is splendidly equipped for a young revolutionary dramatist, and that the play is—

A high watermark of revolutionary drama and probably the most effective agit-prop play written in this country thus far.

Now, that is a very high commendation, is it not, of your work?

Mr. ODETS. I think so; yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. Particularly from the Communist standpoint. Now, what is meant by agit-prop play, when he says it is a most effective agit-prop play?

Mr. ODETS. Agit-prop is short for the phrase agitational propaganda.

(Representative John S. Wood left the room at this point.)

Mr. TAVENNER. Though he criticized certain technical aspects of your plays, would you not say that at that time, in January of 1935, that the Communist Party was very enthusiastic about *Waiting for Lefty*?

Mr. ODETS. Yes; I remember telling you distinctly in our last meeting that they were delighted with the play. I was very clear to make the points that they thought it was a wonderful play. If I had to hazard a guess about what would happen, it would be that a reviewer would set down what he thought about the play, and then someone else in the Communist Party would say, "Look, don't you be so harsh with him. You better write another review and take that back. We can't afford to lose that fellow." This would be my idea.

Mr. TAVENNER. This one of January 5, 1935, was the first?

Mr. ODETS. Well, I have one here of February 1935.

Mr. TAVENNER. January 12 is earlier.

Mr. ODETS. Fortunately all of the others I have dated exactly on the exact date.

(Representative John S. Wood reentered the room at this point.)

Mr. TAVENNER. I find the *New Masses* review in its issue of January 29, 1935, in which Joshua Kunitz was reviewer, also published a review of your work. Are you acquainted with Joshua Kunitz?

Mr. ODETS. I know the name.

Mr. TAVENNER. It seems that I am mistaken in saying in that Joshua Kunitz was the reviewer on the occasion I mentioned. It was Stanley Burnshaw. Were you acquainted with Stanley Burnshaw?

Mr. ODETS. I know that name.

Mr. TAVENNER. What is that?

Mr. ODETS. I say I know that name.

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Burnshaw had this to say:

On January 5, when the curtain ran down on the first performance of Clifford Odets' *Waiting for Lefty* the audience cheered, whistled, and screamed with applause.

In the course of his review, he stated that "Some persons referred to the play as a disjointed, structurally arbitrary piece of playwright." In fact, that is about what John Howard Lawson had said about it; is that correct?

Mr. ODETS. You have very good notes there.

Mr. TAVENNER. Isn't that right?

Mr. ODETS. I remember Jack Lawson. I don't remember what he said.

Mr. TAVENNER. It says:

Yet a second seeing by the *New Masses* reviewer provides sufficient perspective for discerning in the juxtaposition of scenes a clear logic, binding them into a solid dramatic role. The *New Masses* reviewer said there were some weak scenes in the play, but that the terrific emotional drive of the play as a unit is more than the total effectiveness of the eight scenes.

So that was a commendation by the *New Masses*. Now, John Howard Lawson, according to our study, was concerned in his criticism with the technique, as he referred to it, but he does not question your talent about which he says it is of "outstanding significance, his skill, vitality, and honesty rarely found in the current theater."

Lawson states that while *Lefty* represents a tremendous advance over *Awake and Sing*, nevertheless there are structural flaws, which he referred to. And he predicts for you a great future.

Well, that certainly is not a severe criticism of your work from the standpoint of the Communist Party. If up to this point there had been criticism, it has been with regard to what the reviewers referred to as structural flaws, or errors in technique.

Mr. ODETS. Well, may I say a few words about that?

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes.

Mr. ODETS. They may have interest. A Marxist believes that if you would straighten out your ideology in terms of Marxist orientation, that when you do that, you will no longer have structural flaws. So to say that something has structural flaws means that this young writer must attend more Marxian ideology and Marxian study. I happen to know from reading a book or two that John Howard Lawson very thoroughly believes that. I do not. I do not think that if you spoil your inner life by Marxian ideology that you will then have no structural difficulties in writing a play.

The essence of John Howard Lawson's meaning would be that. In fact, he has written two whole books about it. I have respect in many areas for Jack Lawson as, for instance, a once very, very gifted playwright, but the part that I am discussing is, I think, arrant nonsense. Also, I may say something else. What was happening here was that they had a hot potato in their hands and one fellow would say "This



has great value," another fellow would say, "No, he is not very good." They would keep contradicting each other, and I suppose somewhere they made a rule and said "Now, look, let's don't drive these people away. Now let's send a more important man to review the play."

So frequently you have a play reviewed two or three times. The same play would be reviewed two or three times, and I am guessing on the basis of trying to tie the writer closer. "Don't chase him away, don't say harsh things. Ameliorate these statements by a second review." This is what would happen.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now, I think I should read the criticism or part of the review made by Michael Blankfort, which appeared in *New Masses* on March 5, 1935, when he reviewed *Awake and Sing*. Now, he took the position that *Awake and Sing* was not as great a work as *Waiting for Lefty*. But he said this:

*Awake and Sing* was worth seeing because Odets is one of the new revolutionary voices, because he has something invigorating to say, because he says it in a fresh way.

He also criticizes one of the play's characters for realizing his mission out of mysticism, rather than out of an understanding of social forces as it should be in a revolutionary play.

Blankfort concedes that Mr. Odets was growing into a revolutionary understanding of those matters. Now, what was your interpretation of that criticism?

Mr. ODETS. Well, sir, you are doing what I have done. If I may say so, you are taking out of his review of March 5, 1935, certain praise. Well, what I have taken out is certain dispraise, and what I had him saying here is—

The types, delete, are no more than characters in a play, well documented puppets, delete, nothing advances through them and they do not grow. Reminds me of etchings you can catch with the first superficial glance. If the characters in *Awake and Sing* aren't burlesqued, the credit must go to the director. Too often for the help of a play, a situation is created out of nothing just to get across a wisecrack or a lift.

This was the most serious play I had written. This had been received by the leading newspapers of New York as a minor masterpiece. Here were my friends on the left publishing these sort of things.

Mr. TAVENNER. And he followed it by stating that if the audience was staying for a laugh it would miss the real revolutionary message in the play; didn't he?

Mr. ODETS. Something like that.

Mr. TAVENNER. So your position is that these various items of criticism and praise were designed to pressure you as a member of the party into writing more in line with the party dictates and the party policy, is that what I am to understand?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, I would say that they would want me to write more from their world point of view.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, didn't you write later on Communist themes?

Mr. ODETS. On Communist themes?

Mr. TAVENNER. Or Communist experiences?

Mr. ODETS. I have said before, Mr. Tavenner, and would like to say again, that I have always tried to write not out of any themes to one side of myself, but to themes that were central and germane to my own life. I do remember stating at our last meeting as an ex-

ample that if I were moved by certain situations of poverty that this would be because my mother worked in a stocking factory in Philadelphia at the age of 11 and died a broken woman and an old woman at the age of 48, and when I wrote, sir, it was out of central, personal things. I did not learn my hatred of poverty, sir, out of communism.

MR. TAVENNER. Did you ever write a play which was based on your experience in the Communist Party?

MR. ODETS. No, I never did. I have never written a Communist play because I want to write plays and always to write plays for the largest American audiences that I can reach. I want to write American plays. I want to talk to average Americans. I don't want to talk to a special minority group. I believe that the Communists have a very special and narrow view of American life. That is not my view. There is another reason that I broke with them.

MR. TAVENNER. You spoke a moment ago of the Communist Party taking one view of your works on one occasion and then a different view later. I am referring particularly in that respect to your play *Paradise Lost*. You find in the *Daily Worker* of December 13, 1935, that Michael Blankfort praised *Paradise Lost* as being a better play than *Awake and Sing* in many respects. And Robert Forsythe, in *New Masses*, issue of December 24, 1935, praised *Paradise Lost* as much better than both *Awake and Sing* and *Waiting for Lefty*. Then we find the *Daily Worker* of February 7, 1936, just several months later, the reviewer, Jay Gerlando, took the contrary position and criticized your play. And I think it is important to bring out to your attention here and ask for your comment regarding the type of criticism at this time. He took the position, this reviewer took the position, that the characters in *Paradise Lost* grow out of the theater more than out of real life, and he says, "And the Marxists have an advantage in making real characters because they understand the forces that shape human beings."

Have you any comment to make on that change in attitude, and the reference to the Marxists?

MR. ODETS. I believe it is what I said before. One reviewer would go to see a play. He might write a favorable review and then someone else in the Communist Party would say, "That isn't true, that play is not so good. This play demonstrates dangerous tendencies and we must send somebody to review the play and point out the dangerous tendencies to our readers."

Or it might go the other way around. The first review was bad and they said, "Wait a minute. Don't drive this young playwright away. Let us send a second reviewer."

You mentioned *Paradise Lost*, you read a favorable review or two, and then before you read a favorable review of Burnshaw correcting some other reviewer of *Awake and Sing*. I happen to have here a *New Masses* review of Burnshaw of *Paradise Lost* which is quite bad.

MR. TAVENNER. We will come to that in a moment, if you will let me complete my talk here.

Now, in addition to that criticism on February 7, we find that 4 days later in *New Masses* that the reviewer Stanley Burnshaw, which is probably the thing that you are referring to, in commenting on *Paradise Lost* said:



It is the lack of Marxism which has deprived the play of its fundamental social truth.

And then he also stated :

It is regrettable to see a left writer proceeding on an utterly false premise, portray as doomed objects of decay that very middle class which will be enlisted as a vigorous ally in the growing people's front against fascism and war.

Now, how do you explain the difference in the reviews from December of 1935, from both the Daily Worker and the New Masses, and the reviewers from both Daily Worker and the New Masses in February of 1936?

Mr. ODETS. I can explain it only in that way, that there seems to have been, when a playwright or valuable writer presents a new work, there would be a review and then there would seem to be conferences about the review and then they would send out another reviewer to make a reevaluation if they thought that was necessary. This, of course, was with the obvious intention of binding the writer to the Communist Party, and the Marxist world point of view. So that actually here again is Burnshaw recommending that if I were a better Marxist I would be a better playwright and a better constructor of plays. There is also a horrifying review by James Farrell, in a Communist publication, of *Paradise Lost*. He says it is a burlesque of my previous work. "The lines are gags. I don't understand how he could have written a play so consistently, so ferociously bad. It is mistitled. It should be known as *Lay Down and Die*." This is from *Partisan Review* and *Anvil*, which was another magazine like the *New Masses* in those days.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the date?

Mr. ODETS. The date was February 1936.

Mr. TAVENNER. And in all of these publications the Communist Party seemed to have changed its line in its approach to your work between December 1935 and February 1936.

Mr. ODETS. There they are, there is one contradicting the other.

Mr. TAVENNER. But they are consistent as to the time of contradiction.

Mr. ODETS. There were contradictions in this one. Mike Gold would write a contradiction of this one, so you might end up with five or six reviews of two plays. You have mentioned two and I have mentioned two, and that makes four. I vaguely remember Mike Gold answering James Farrell and saying he was much too harsh, that it was a beautiful play. Now we have five reviews of the play. It was a very hectic and tumultuous time. However, I believe that the intention is clear through all of these, "Let us not chase this young writer away. Let us reconsider. Let us make him reconsider. If he is not Marxist enough, let us try to teach him. Let us try to show him."

I would think such intention was clear through all of these views. Some of these people are rascals, but on the other hand some of them were people of high seriousness and integrity in their feelings.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were you acquainted with Herbert Kline?

Mr. ODETS. Yes. I met him. I met him as an editor of a magazine called *New Theater*. I knew him.

Mr. TAVENNER. After you went to Hollywood, did you have occasion to contact Herbert Kline there?

Mr. ODETS. I did not, but I did meet him once or twice casually in restaurants.

Mr. TAVENNER. He was a witness before the committee in separate hearings of last year, but refused to testify. Did you know him to be a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. No, I did not.

Mr. TAVENNER. The New Theater magazine, of which you say he was the editor, was the official publication of the New Theater League, was it not?

Mr. ODETS. I don't know about that. I am willing to say it is, if you have notes about it. I didn't know that.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, I show you the issue of February 1935. Will you examine it, please, and state what appears from pages 13 to 20?

What is it, please?

Mr. ODETS. What is the question?

Mr. TAVENNER. What do you find on pages 13 to 20?

Mr. ODETS. It does say that it is an organ of what you said, the organ of the New Theater League, National Film and Photo Workers League, and this edition prints *Waiting for Lefty* in its entirety.

Mr. TAVENNER. From pages 13 to 20. This play was based on a taxicab strike in New York City in February 1934, was it not?

Mr. ODETS. That is what they say. But it is just something I kind of made up.

Mr. TAVENNER. Wasn't it based on that strike?

Mr. ODETS. I didn't know anything about a taxicab strike. I had a few boyhood friends who were cab drivers. I knew their lingo, I knew their talk. I have never been near a strike in my life.

Mr. TAVENNER. There was a taxicab strike in February 1934 which you were familiar with, wasn't there?

Mr. ODETS. No; I learned later there was such a strike.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were the pictures appearing in that article on pages 14, 17, 18, and 20 from the first production of the play?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir; they were.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did John Garfield appear in the play?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir; he did.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were you acquainted with John Garfield at that time?

Mr. ODETS. Oh, yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you ever know John Garfield to be a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. No, sir; I never knew.

Mr. TAVENNER. I believe you received an award from the New Theater League for the production of *Waiting for Lefty*; did you not?

Mr. ODETS. After having been produced, written and produced, I think I told you the last time they came to me and said, "We have had a one-act play contest and no good material has shown up. Do you mind if we give you the prize?" I said "No; I don't mind."

Mr. TAVENNER. According to your statement you were told that yours was the only play submitted?

Mr. ODETS. Something like that. Nothing showed of any merit or value, and would I take the prize.

Mr. TAVENNER. In the February 2, 1939, issue of the *Daily Worker*, it is stated, "In 1935 the New Theater League first attracted wide

attention when *Waiting for Lefty*, by Clifford Odets, who had been known as a playwright before, was chosen as the best among hundreds of scripts submitted."

Mr. ODETS. That made a good story, I would say. But it was not the truth.

Mr. TAVENNER. It was not true.

Returning to the magazine *New Theater*, according to a note by the author appearing at the end of the script of *Waiting for Lefty*, no production of the play could be presented without your permission. Is that correct?

Mr. ODETS. That was my hope.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, what copyright protection did you have when you produced the play?

Mr. ODETS. I will guess, in the line of normal procedure, I later took a copyright out on the play. I didn't know about copyrights when the play was written. But I would doubt that in my entire life I earned \$1,000 out of that play. People just did it. It was kind of public property. That play has gone to this day. As a matter of fact, one of the few times permission was asked for that play was from the United States Army. They did it in Japan just after the war.

Mr. TAVENNER. According to the *Daily Worker* of January 23, 1948, *Waiting for Lefty* was produced under the auspices of the Communist Party of New Jersey, at a mass demonstration on January 25, 1948. Did you grant permission to the Communist Party of New Jersey to produce your play?

Mr. ODETS. I haven't granted permission for that play, to my knowledge, I would guess, for 8 or 10 years. The play is now handled by my agent, Brandt and Brandt, in New York City, and is rather infrequently done by colleges.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, were you acquainted with the fact that the play was being produced or would be produced by the Communist Party of New Jersey in 1948?

Mr. ODETS. No, I don't know about that. No. As a matter of fact, the last year I was in California, some people came from New York and told me they saw a very good production of *Waiting for Lefty* in New York City. I would guess that was around this time. It was somewhere down on Second Avenue that ran for a long time. I knew nothing about that, either.

Mr. TAVENNER. On April 30, 1948, the play was presented by the *New Theater*, according to the *Daily Worker* of April 30, 1948. Did you grant permission for its production by the *New Theater*?

Mr. TAVENNER. I have not granted permission for the production of that play for, I would guess easily 8 or 10 years, with the one exception that I told you about.

Mr. ODETS. Well, how did they obtain authority to reproduce this play if you weren't asked about it?

Mr. ODETS. *Waiting for Lefty* has been done all over the world. To make an example it has been done in the British Isles in 17 different dialects and I have not received 5 cents of royalties. I don't know, I would say that the play existed as a kind of public service.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then the Communist Party has made the use of the play, regardless of the amount of criticism that it may have received by technical reviewing writers, at the time it was produced.



MR. ODETS. They have used the play a great deal. I have said here several times that they thought it was a wonderful play to have, a wonderful play to use. I would not like you to misconstrue anything I have said as saying that the Communist Party didn't think the play was not a very fine play, particularly to produce. It was at one time a kind of light machinegun that you wheeled in to use whenever there was any kind of strike trouble.

MR. TAVENNER. According to the March 16, 1937, issue of the *Daily Worker*, the Chicago Repertory Group produced *Waiting for Lefty* for the reason assigned that it hits the nail on the head so perfectly. It deals with the problem of taxicab drivers to form their own union and to strike for better living conditions as stated. With the taxicab strike on Chicago's own doorstep, the Chicago Repertory Group, it was said, was able to respond perfectly at the psychological moment. So again, the play was used in special instances, apparently, by the Communist Party. Do you know of any other instances?

MR. ODETS. I don't offhand, no; I don't know of any instances, but I should think there were dozens and dozens of them. I mean, I know that the play has been translated into almost every language in the world, and I know that that play must have played in over 200 different American cities in its 15 or 17 years of existence.

MR. TAVENNER. This would all seem to confirm your statement that the criticism made of your play was done for the purpose of influencing you in your future writings because the Communist Party has not only praised, from time to time, the work, but has actually used it in special instances on many occasions for its own propaganda purposes.

MR. ODETS. That is about the only one of my plays that they have done that with.

MR. TAVENNER. Mr. Odets, there is considerable information in the files of the committee that reflects your interest in, your support of, or your affiliation with a number of organizations of a communistic nature, usually referred to as Communist-front organizations. Inasmuch as all of this so-called activity occurred after you say you left the Communist Party, the committee would like to know how you were approached for support of these different groups, what induced you to lend your name, if you did do so, and any other explanation that you care to offer.

The first matter that I desire to ask you about, you were a member of the party at the time that it first arose, or your alleged affiliation with it arose. Were you affiliated with an organization known as the International Union of Revolutionary Writers?

MR. ODETS. I can only say that the name is familiar. Was that an American organization or was that an organization of—

MR. TAVENNER. That was a Soviet organization.

MR. ODETS. Yes, that was an organization to which almost every important writer in the world belonged to, back in 1934, 1935, and 1936.

MR. TAVENNER. Did you have any correspondence with the organization?

MR. ODETS. What they did was send—they had a monthly or every other month—some magazine, the name of which I don't remember, which they sent free, and they sent literature. They sent pamphlets

and brochures on what was happening in the theater and what was happening in literature all over Europe.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was the name International Literature the name of the publication that you said you were unable to recall?

Mr. ODETS. I think so. I think it was printed around newspaper style.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you a newspaper copy of several pages from the September 1935 issue of International Literature. You will note that this is the official organ of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers. On page 3 appears a letter from you. Do you recall the occasion?

Mr. ODETS. No. I have seen this letter when I was here last.

Mr. TAVENNER. At the time you were here, we did not have available sufficient identification of that letter. The letter is not dated, as you see, but it was issued in the September—it does appear in the September 1935 issue of that.

Mr. ODETS. There is no doubt I wrote this letter, I recognize the style.

Mr. TAVENNER. I want to read to you the first paragraph of your letter:

Many thanks for your comradely letter from the Soviet Union. It gave me a great thrill to have your letter. In fact, I walked around the city showing it to friends all day, and took it backstage to our working actor comrades of the Group Theater and read it to the group in the dressing room.

Your letter indicates that you were very much impressed with receiving a letter from the International Literature.

Mr. ODETS. Yes, I was.

Mr. TAVENNER. You were a member of the Communist Party at that time, were you not?

Mr. ODETS. I would say roughly or approximately 1935, late in 1935.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you have any other connection or association with the International Union of Revolutionary Writers?

Mr. ODETS. I would say, to the best of my memory, that if I wrote one or two letters like that in my lifetime it would be a great deal, and the rest of my connection would be to receive their literature.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you a photostatic copy of an article that appeared in the January 18, 1935, issue of the Daily Worker. This article is a call for a Congress of American Revolutionary Writers, on May 1.

I want to read several paragraphs from the article. The opening paragraph is:

The capitalist system crumbles so rapidly before our eyes that whereas 10 years ago scarcely more than a handful of writers were sufficiently farsighted and courageous to take a stand for proletarian revolution, today hundreds of poets, novelists, dramatists, critics, short-story writers, and journalists recognize the necessity of personally helping to accelerate the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of a workers' government.

Further along in the article we find the following:

We propose, therefore, that a congress of American Revolutionary Writers be held in New York City on May 1, 1935, that to this congress shall be invited all writers who have achieved some standing in their respective fields, who have clearly indicated their sympathy to the revolutionary cause, who do not need to be convinced of the decay of capitalism, of the inevitability of the revolution.



And further along in the article we find the following:

We believe such a congress should create the League of American Writers, affiliated with the International Union of Revolutionary Writers. The program of the League of American Writers would be evolved at the congress, basing itself on the following: Fight against imperialist war and fascism, defend the Soviet Union against capitalist aggression, for the development and strengthening of the revolutionary labor movement, and so forth.

The call was signed by such well known and outstanding Communists as Earl Browder, Theodore Dreiser, Michael Gold, Clarence Hathaway, Herb Kline, John Howard Lawson, Lewis Lozowick, Joseph North, M. J. Olgin, Isidor Schneider, Alexander Trachtenberg, Ella Winter, and Richard White. The congress was held in New York City on April 27, 1935, and the League of American Writers was formed.

Did you attend or participate in this congress?

Mr. ODETS. I have no memory of that, but in that time I would have been glad to attend such a congress. I have no memory, particularly, of attending a congress or a meeting. But I would have been glad to have been there, then, in 1935.

Mr. TAVENNER. In other words, the purpose as expressed in that met with your approval at that time?

Mr. ODETS. Well, what is there is very highfalutin', very high-flown. I think when I hear it and follow it with my eye as you are reading, it is silly, foolish. But at that time one believed that perhaps all of our problems could be worked out by some kind of socialism, and I believed that then.

Mr. TAVENNER. I desire to offer the photostatic copy in evidence and ask that it be marked "Odets Exhibit No. 1."

Mr. WOOD. It shall be admitted.

(Photostat referred to was marked for identification "Odets Exhibit No. 1" and filed for the record.)

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you the official proceedings of that meeting as published by the International Publishers. Will you look at page 188 and state whether your name appears as one of those selected to the National Council of the League of American Writers?

Mr. ODETS. Yes; I see my name there.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were you at that time a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. I don't know. I would just offhand guess so, I should say so.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you turn now to the last page of the book. Do you not find that the official report closes with this language:

When the applause died down, James Farrell arose and suggested that the congress conclude its final session by singing the Internationale. This was done.

Do you recall that?

Mr. ODETS. No; I don't remember being at such a meeting. But in those days, these kind of things could happen very easily.

Mr. TAVENNER. How long were you affiliated with the League of American Writers?

Mr. ODETS. My memory would be, in any official capacity, for some very short time. It might have been a year. I told you that I began to have quarrels with them in public on their platforms at their meetings. I attended a number of meetings of the League of American writers.

Mr. TAVENNER. What do you mean you had quarrels?

Mr. ODETS. I had quarrels with their points of views, because if someone got up and made a critical evaluation—for instance John Howard Lawson got up and made a critical evaluation of the Broadway Theater season, and I disagreed with him. I would ask for the floor and get up on the platform and have a fight with him about it in public. As I said, the last time I was there, this kind of made me *persona non grata* to these circles, and resulted, finally, in a real cooling off of any kind of relationship between myself and most of these people. Actually, seeing these names, many of these people have become since violent anti-Communist, and are totally adamant to the Communist Party of America.

Mr. TAVENNER. At the present time?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, dozens and dozens of them.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, how long did you remain connected with the organization, whether in an official capacity or otherwise?

Mr. ODETS. I could only state approximately and take a rough guess on it. It might be for a year or two, or it might be for 3 years.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you a photostatic copy of page 25 of the May 4, 1937, issue of *New Masses*. This is the manifesto and call to the second congress of the League of American Writers. Will you examine the exhibit and state whether your name appears among those signing the call?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, I see my name here.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you tell the committee the circumstances under which you were solicited to sign the call for the meeting?

Mr. ODETS. I don't remember, because these sort of things come to you through the mail for the most part. The letter would be a "former," a mimeographed letter, and it would come through the mail, signed in mimeographing by one, two, or three or four persons, and this happened so many times during the week that it is really difficult to remember who contacted anyone about these things. I stated before that right today I get 40 or 50 letters of this sort every week, every week.

Mr. TAVENNER. You must be on the list of all of them.

Mr. ODETS. I am on a lot of lists. I don't think I sign things as frequently as I did. I am a little more careful, a little more selective.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you sign that?

Mr. ODETS. If my name is here, I would say I signed it, sure.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you a photostatic copy of the letterhead of the fourth congress of the League of American Writers, held in 1941. Will you examine the exhibit and state whether your name appears on this letterhead?

Mr. ODETS. My name is here; yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. That would indicate that you were then active in the organization as late as 1941.

Mr. ODETS. No; that would not indicate that I was active. It would indicate that my name was still on some executive list. In fact, I am surprised that this League of American Writers still exists in the year 1941. This is a lot of news to me.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you attend or participate in the congress for which that call was issued?

Mr. ODETS. Not to my memory. This may have been the last one, in which I broke up the meeting. I don't know. Manhattan Center?

No; I did not attend this meeting because I have never been in Manhattan Center in my life.

Mr. TAVENNER. Let me refresh your recollection about that. I show you a copy of *New Masses*, issue of June 17, 1941. On pages 10 and 11 are drawings of several people in attendance at the congress. Will you examine the exhibit and state whether you are depicted as in attendance?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, I am depicted.

Mr. TAVENNER. Does that refresh your recollection?

Mr. ODETS. Well, if my drawing is there I must have been there, and that must have been the meeting that I broke up.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you know the present status of the League of American Writers?

Mr. ODETS. I was just supposing it is totally defunct.

Mr. TAVENNER. That was the last of its meetings the one just referred to.

Do you know that the League of American Writers ceased to exist shortly after the attack on Russia by Germany? In other words, it was an imperialist war on June 21, but on June 22 it was the people's war, if you recall. Do you recall that sudden switch in the Communist Party line when the White House was being picketed one day, and the President called a warmonger, and the next day he was a great leader of the freedom-loving nations.

Mr. ODETS. I remember that. I didn't remember but you say the league broke up on this issue, or something. I didn't remember that until you told me the last time.

Mr. TAVENNER. I am asking, do you know whether or not it did break up almost as quickly as the Communist Party changed its line?

Mr. ODETS. No; you gave me that information the last time I was here. That was all I knew about it.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then the League of American Writers set up a committee known as the Exiled Writers' Committee. I believe the Hollywood counterpart was called the Hollywood Committee for Writers in Exile. Were you affiliated with either of those groups while in Hollywood or in New York?

Mr. ODETS. I must frankly say I have no memory of it.

Mr. WOOD. The committee will stand in recess until 10:30 in the morning.

(Whereupon, at 4:30 p. m., the committee was recessed to reconvene at 10:30 a. m., Tuesday, May 20, 1952.)





## COMMUNIST INFILTRATION OF THE HOLLYWOOD MOTION-PICTURE INDUSTRY—PART 8

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 1952

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES,  
*Washington, D. C.*

### PUBLIC HEARING

A subcommittee of the Committee on Un-American Activities met, pursuant to recess, at 11 a. m., in room 226, Old House Office Building, Hon. John S. Wood presiding.

Committee members present: Representatives John S. Wood, Francis E. Walter, and Harold H. Velde.

Staff members present: Frank S. Tavenner, Jr., counsel; Thomas W. Beale, Sr., assistant counsel; John W. Carrington, clerk; Raphael I. Nixon, research director; and A. S. Poore, editor.

Mr. Wood. The committee will come to order. Let the record show that for the purpose of this hearing today I have set up a subcommittee composed of Mr. Walter, Mr. Velde, and Mr. Wood, who are all present.

Proceed, Mr. Tavenner.

### TESTIMONY OF CLIFFORD ODETS, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS COUNSEL, EUGENE GRESSMAN

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Odets, at the close of our session yesterday I was calling to your attention the committee records of various activities of yours in connection with Communist-front organizations in a period after you stated you withdrew from the Communist Party. I desire now to continue with that same line of questioning.

In the October 5, 1937, issue of *New Masses* you are listed as a sponsor of a reception and dinner given Herman Reissig, executive secretary of the American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy. It will be recalled that Reissig made the trip to Cuba with you in 1935 as one of the members of your commission to investigate labor conditions in Cuba. At that time he was representing the American League Against War and Fascism. At this time, in 1937, we find him to be the executive secretary of the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy. Will you state what the reason was for your sponsorship of this reception for Mr. Reissig? Was it due to personal friendship for Reissig or was it the result of your sympathy for the organization he represented?

Mr. ODETS. Mr. Tavenner, I have no memory of this, but looking at the advertisement I see this is for Spanish aid to Spanish children,

a reception dinner not only for the Reverend Reissig but also Mr. Leland Stowe, the distinguished war correspondent of the New York Herald Tribune. I think that under normal circumstances I well might have put my name on this as a sponsor, with no sense that the Reverend Reissig was or is a Communist. I don't know him very well. I doubt if I saw him now if I would recognize him. I have actually no recollection of this, but this would be my explanation of it.

Mr. TAVENNER. You are aware of the fact, are you not, that the Attorney General has classified both the American League Against War and Fascism and the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy as Communist organizations?

Mr. ODETS. Well, my judgment of that would be that if it were so classified it would be long after the fact. If that is 1937, I don't remember when it—

Mr. TAVENNER. It is true that the citation as a Communist organization was not made until a date subsequent to that, but the citation means that the organization was a Communist organization from the date of its inception. In fact, both of these organizations were out of existence at the time that the Attorney General cited them.

Mr. ODETS. I frankly don't know about that.

Mr. TAVENNER. The November 1937 issue of Soviet Russia Today published facsimiles of signatures to greetings sent to the Soviet Union on the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Soviet Union. This is generally referred to as the Golden Book of American Friendship with the Soviet Union. Will you examine the exhibit and state whether or not your name appears in the second column?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir, it does.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you tell the committee the circumstances under which your signature was obtained to that statement?

Mr. ODETS. Well, with no real memory of this document, I would say that someone sent me a telegram, or I might have received a cable from Europe, and I lent my signature to the document. It is obviously my signature. I have no real memory of it, but I must have received some communication and I answered. I did not at that time, I must say, and I would like to say generally—I had no sense of the Soviet Union as a country opposed to our interests; it never occurred to me to think of the Soviet Union that way. I thought of the Soviet Union then as a country of extraordinary theater, of extraordinary literary figures, and any greeting or relationship that I might in those days have made with that large country would be in relation to my particular field of theater, the theater, and theater literature. But I must point out that in those days not only myself but no one had a sense, or very few people had a sense, of the Soviet Union as a country opposed to our interests anyway. I think it was during that time that we began to recognize the Soviet Union, began to move into a kind of amnesty with that country, in terms of trade, for instance.

Mr. TAVENNER. The Daily Worker of April 6, 1937, at page 9, carries an article regarding the formation of a new film company called Frontier Films. According to this article some of the staff members were John Howard Lawson, Philip Stephenson, Albert Maltz, Elia Kazan, and Kyle Crichton. While members of the advisory board included Bruce Bliven, Josephine Herbst, Edwin Rolph, and Clifford Odets.

Will you tell the committee how this organization was created, who fostered the idea, and, in general, the purposes of the group?

Mr. ODETS. My memory of that group was hazy until you reminded me of it at one of our last meetings, and what would have happened is that I was approached by an old friend of mine, Paul Strand, a very distinguished photographer, and I was approached and asked for money to help make a progressive film. I was indignant and said that I was no banker, that it was not money that I could furnish to a film-making outfit, but if they wanted my best advice in relation to photographing, directing, or writing for the film, I would be glad to help. This, of course, was on the basis that Paul Strand, who is in my opinion one of the two or three great photographers of the United States, came and said he was going to head the film.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, now, was that the manner in which consent was obtained to the use of your name as a member of the advisory board?

Mr. ODETS. Actually I don't remember that I gave my name, but I said, "If you want me to help you on scripts and on the mechanical end of making a picture, I will help you. I can't help you in terms of money because I am not a banker."

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you serve on the advisory board?

Mr. ODETS. This is my last knowledge of the entire matter. I am not familiar with what they made, if they did make a picture.

Mr. TAVENNER. Is this the first knowledge that you received that you were on the advisory board?

Mr. ODETS. My meeting with you 2 or 3 weeks ago was my first knowledge of that.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you recall the activities of John Howard Lawson, Albert Maltz, and others mentioned there in connection with the production of Frontier Films?

Mr. ODETS. I didn't know that they had any connection with it, and certainly never met them in any relationship to this film or this film company. I am quite certain of that.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, how do you account for the fact that they carried you as a member of the advisory board, if you have no knowledge of it?

Mr. ODETS. I was simply supposing that acting on my suggestion that I could help on the technical end of making a film, rather than the financial end, that they then used my name as part of an advisory council.

Mr. TAVENNER. You agree to that?

Mr. ODETS. I have no memory of that.

Mr. WOOD. May I ask at this point, Who did you have that conversation with at the time you were approached and told them you would be willing to help them?

Mr. ODETS. My best memory would be that it was with Paul Strand, the photographer.

Mr. WOOD. Did you talk to anybody else that you remember, about it?

Mr. ODETS. I am almost certain that I did not, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you have any other recollection of your connection with that organization?

Mr. ODETS. I am quite sure that that is where it ended.



Mr. TAVENNER. Hollywood Now was the official organ of the Hollywood anti-Nazi League?

Mr. ODETS. Hollywood Now?

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes; it is a publication, Hollywood Now. In the issue of March 26, 1938, there is an article to the effect that 100 prominent liberals had petitioned the Home Minister of Japan asking the freedom of those Japanese impounded on political charges, since the beginning of the Japanese invasion of China. This petition was released by the International Labor Defense, and your name appears as one of the signers.

Will you tell the committee the circumstances under which your signature was obtained to this petition and the circumstances under which you permitted the International Labor Defense to release it, release the petition?

Mr. ODETS. Mr. Tavenner, I might gladly have given my name to this, but I have no memory of it whatsoever, no memory of it at all.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you recall any connection that you had or any contact that you had with the International Labor Defense in regard to that matter?

Mr. ODETS. No, I certainly never in my life had any official connection or work to do with the ILD. If I did give my name to this, again it would have been a matter of something through the mail or perhaps a telegram, special delivery letter, but my memory of it is nonexistent.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you know at or about the time of the release of this petition that your name appeared on it?

Mr. ODETS. I am sorry, I really have no memory of it.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you a photostatic copy of the letterhead of the Medical Bureau and North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, dated July 6, 1938. Will you examine the exhibit and state whether your name appears as a member of the theater arts committee of the organization?

Mr. ODETS. Yes; I see my name here.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you tell the committee the circumstances under which your sponsorship of that organization was obtained?

Mr. ODETS. Again I must say that it was probably done in the usual way, by a letter or telegram, and I might well have given my name if it had to do with medical aid for the Spanish civil war. But by whom I was contacted or when, I have no memory of that. Those things, I must say, were usually done by the officials of the organization, so whoever the top sponsoring officials were, if a letter came it would be signed by one, two, three, or four names. Any judgment I would make would usually be on the basis of those names, that is, judgment as to whether or not I should sign it.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you a photostatic copy of the letterhead of the American Relief Ship for Spain. Will you examine the exhibit and state whether your name appears as the sponsor?

Mr. ODETS. My name is certainly there, yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you tell the committee the circumstances under which your sponsorship to that organization was obtained?

Mr. ODETS. It could only be as outlined on the last one.

Mr. TAVENNER. You will note that the letter is signed by Anne Dubro.

Mr. ODETS. I have no idea who that is; not the slightest idea.



Mr. TAVENNER. I show you a photostatic copy of a letterhead of the American League for Peace and Democracy, dated April 6, 1939. Will you examine the exhibit, please, and state whether your name appears as a member of the Theater Arts Committee sponsoring the organization?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir; it does.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you tell us the circumstances under which your sponsorship of that organization was obtained?

Mr. ODETS. I don't know. I don't know what it is.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, do you recall being the sponsor?

Mr. ODETS. No, I am sorry I don't.

Mr. VELDE. Mr. Counsel, are all of these organizations cited by the Attorney General to be Communist-front organizations?

Mr. TAVENNER. Either by the Attorney General or by this committee.

In my preliminary statement to this line of questioning, I made a claim that it was the Communist-front organizations that we were intending to inquire about. I show you a circular reproduced and circulated by the Communist Party. It is a statement labeled "In Defense of the Bill of Rights." A most casual reading reveals it is a statement in defense of the Communist Party and known Communists. This statement was released on December 14, 1939. The name of Clifford Odets appears as one of the signers. Will you tell the committee who solicited your signature to this statement, and the circumstances?

Mr. ODETS. Again I regret to say that I have no memory of this. It seems to me to be some broad-front matter and I might well have signed it.

Mr. TAVENNER. You stated it was a broad-front matter. That article shows it is directly a Communist Party matter, doesn't it?

Mr. ODETS. Well, it is headlined "In defense of the Bill of Rights," and I don't see that as strictly a Communist matter.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then it follows with one paragraph regarding the Bill of Rights, and the rest of it is defense of the Communist Party. There is one paragraph, according to my recollection of the document, which relates to the subject, and there are about three or four which relate to the defense of the Communist Party.

Mr. ODETS. My eye falls on a statement here that "We are not Communists and we are not concerned at this moment with the merits or demerits of the doctrines advocated by the Communists."

Mr. VELDE. Mr. Odets, do you believe now that the Communist Party has been interested in preserving our Bill of Rights and the Constitution?

Mr. ODETS. I would think that now the Communist Party was interested in preserving its existence.

Mr. VELDE. You still maintain that the Communist Party at the present time in the United States of America is interested in preserving our Constitution; is that your opinion?

Mr. ODETS. I would say its primary function was to preserve its own existence, not the Constitution and not the Bill of Rights.

Mr. VELDE. Preserving the Communist Party's existence?

Mr. ODETS. Its existence.

Mr. VELDE. And what do you deem as the program of the Communist Party in this country?

Mr. ODETS. The program of the——

Mr. VELDE. What it has been and what it is at the present time, in regard to our Constitution.

Mr. ODETS. My relationship with the Communist Party over the years was a very distant one. Anything I tell you would be my guess or my speculation. It would not be out of any kind of sure knowledge.

Mr. VELDE. You still have an opinion, don't you?

Mr. ODETS. I have opinions, yes, sir.

Mr. VELDE. Will you state that opinion, please?

Mr. ODETS. What would you like me to express an opinion about exactly?

Mr. VELDE. What your opinion is of the program of the Communist Party in the United States of America, what it has been and what it is at the present time, with relation to the Constitution of the United States.

Mr. ODETS. I know what they say.

Mr. VELDE. You just stated you had an opinion, and I would like to hear that opinion.

Mr. ODETS. Well, my opinion is that the Communist Party is interested in preserving itself as a minority political party. I believe, sir, that that is their right under the United States Constitution. I do not think that their essential purpose is the preservation of the Constitution. I think they want to bring about some kind of social disorder. I find some of their practices reprehensible. I am against secrecy in any political party. I would not advocate the Communist Party for anyone to join because of their secrecy. One of the elements that made me leave the Communist Party was secrecy. I saw no reason to be conspiratorial in the United States. I see no reason now for any political party to be conspiratorial in the United States. I believe in free speech. I believe in open political practice. I advocate these things. Frequently I have gotten in trouble because I have stood up for free speech at moments when it seemed to be even taking the Communist Party point of view. I have fought for civil rights and civil liberties, again when it seemed to be taking the Communist Party point of view. This is why I find myself on some of these documents, because, as I said a few weeks ago, the lines of liberalism and the lines of left thought frequently cross each other. However, if one winnows out and deals only with the Communist Party position in the United States, I am frankly against it. I am simply against——

Mr. VELDE. Then, do you believe that the avowed purpose of the Communist Party in the United States is not to overthrow our form of government, our Constitution, by force and violence?

Mr. ODETS. I don't think that is their purpose.

Mr. VELDE. Even in view of the fact that it was proven to be true in the case of the trial of the 11 Communists?

Mr. ODETS. Well, sir, if I may say so, you have a split of opinion about that, even in the Supreme Court of the United States. You have a majority opinion which says what you say, and you have a minority opinion which says what I feel. And I frankly agree with the minority opinion.

Mr. VELDE. You agree with the minority opinion?

Mr. ODETS. Of Justice Black and Justice Douglas and Justice Frankfurter. Now, I am trying to cut that very fine and tell you as

acutely and honestly as I can what I believe, without evading the issue that you bring out.

Mr. VELDE. I just wanted to get that clear in my mind.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you, while a member of the Communist Party, study the literature given to you by the Communist Party and did you read the constitution of the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. I read all of the literature, sir, only slightly, a little.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, did you read the constitution of the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. I frankly did not know that they had a constitution. That the Communist Party has a constitution, I didn't know that.

Mr. TAVENNER. You have spoken of the Communist Party as a political party. By that do you mean that you do not agree that communism in this country as established and the Communist Party of the United States is not a conspiratorial party directed from sources outside of the United States and aimed at the overthrow of the Government of the United States?

Mr. ODETS. You are asking me, sir, do I believe that the Communist Party is directed by interests outside of the United States, and are they directed toward the overthrow of the United States Government?

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes.

Mr. ODETS. My guess would be that the Communist Party in the United States takes its orders or follows directions, follows directions from European sources. As to my belief about their trying to violently overthrow the Government of the United States, I am inclined to think not, I don't know. The reason I say I don't know is because if a party is interested in real conspiracy, they don't publish, they don't publish newspapers, they don't publish pamphlets, they don't put out all of this literature. I am talking as honestly and as acutely as I can at the moment. I mean, it is easy for me to slough over these matters. It is easy for me to evade these questions. But to answer you honestly I cannot see that a party that would be interested in treachery would publish its programs in the public press, would put out 5-cent pamphlets, would be putting out newspapers, would be putting out pamphlets available to anyone and everyone.

Mr. TAVENNER. Hasn't Lenin been perfectly plain about his objects in overthrowing the governments of capitalistic countries, as he referred to them? Hasn't he put that in writing and hasn't that been the backbone of the doctrine of the Communist Party, openly and aboveboard in every country in the world?

Mr. ODETS. I will agree with you, generally, it is open to question. My little reading says, "Well, this is open to question." But I think I would agree with you generally that where there was a revolution in Russia, Lenin said let's take over. I am certain that is what happened. History certainly tells us that.

Mr. VELDE. May I ask a question for clarification? You mentioned that you felt that the American Communist Party was directed by European sources. What do you mean by "European sources"?

Mr. ODETS. I would say that they took their line—

Mr. VELDE. What part of Europe?

Mr. ODETS. They took their line from Communist Parties abroad. For instance, there seems to have been a time during the war when the Communist Party went about-face and said, "Let's not be a Com-



munist Party any more, let's be some kind of political association." And that is apparently the way they work out things.

Mr. VELDE. You feel that the Communist Party of the United States is directed in its policies by the Comintern?

Mr. ODETS. The case I am thinking of is suddenly the French Communist Party, which said, "Look, you gentlemen are not functioning as you should." Lo and behold, the party makes an about-face and takes the suggestion of the French party and becomes a Communist Party instead of a political association.

Mr. VELDE. You still have not answered my question, or at least it is still apparent in my mind. Do you think the American Communist Party is directed from European sources or from Asiatic or Russian sources?

Mr. ODETS. Let me say both Asiatic and European.

Mr. VELDE. I suppose you realize that the Comintern has its headquarters in Moscow.

Mr. ODETS. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Are you acquainted with the Manual of Organization of the Communist Party which was written by J. Peters?

Mr. ODETS. I am sorry, sir, I never heard of that document.

Mr. TAVENNER. You were referring and basing your judgment, I think, and your estimate of the situation, upon your surprise that a matter would be made public if it was actually a part of a conspiracy. Let me read you a paragraph from the book written by J. Peters, the manual, *The Role and Aim of the Communist Party*.

As the leader and organizer of the proletariat, the Communist Party of the United States of America leads the working class in a fight for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the establishment of a socialistic Soviet republic in the United States, for the complete abolition of classes, for the establishment of socialism, as the first stage of classless, Communist society.

Now, that is written in black and white by the noted organizer of the Communist Party, J. Peters. So you see, it is a matter of public record as to what the Communist Party of the United States stands for, and so I again ask you, in light of what you know, and have learned in your study of communism: Do you maintain that communism is just a political party as distinguished from a conspiracy to overthrow the Government of the United States, directed from a foreign country?

Mr. ODETS. If I may say so, Mr. Tavenner and Mr. Velde, you have me here in a rather singular position. You have me here defending communism. I am not here for that purpose.

Mr. TAVENNER. I only asked you the question to explain yourself, your very loose use of the term "political party."

Mr. ODETS. I simply understand this: I understand that the Communist Party is a legally recognized minority political party in the United States. Am I correct about that, sir?

Mr. TAVENNER. No, this committee has never considered it a political party. It considers that it is a conspiratorial group.

Mr. ODETS. Well, then, I think that recommendation should be made, if I may be so bold as to say so, to have this party declared illegal, because at the moment my best knowledge is that this is a legal political party in the United States. And since this is an investigatory committee, then recommendations must be made for its abolishment.



"This is not in my hands, certainly. And right at the moment, I am in a very uncomfortable position, as I say, of being pushed into a corner defending communism. I don't want to, and I am not here for that purpose.

Mr. TAVENNER. It was not my intention to ask you questions which would put you in a position to defend communism. I wanted merely to give you the opportunity to explain yourself fully because the use of the term as purely a political party may be subject to considerable misconception.

Mr. ODETS. I can only say for myself that I find their conspiratorial methods—conspiratorial means to me chiefly underground, working in secret and hiding. I find them extremely reprehensible.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now, you spoke of the duty of the committee as an investigative body to make recommendations if it believed that the Communist Party is a conspiratorial body, and that possibly the committee should recommend that the Communist Party be outlawed. What is your recommendation on that subject?

Mr. ODETS. My recommendation is that any political party has been made to declare itself in the open, if it wants to exist as a legally recognized political party in the United States. This is my wholehearted recommendation. I believe in democratic procedure. I believe in stating and avowing your beliefs, if you want to stand up for them in public and want support for them.

Mr. VELDE. Even though you admit that the Communist Party is directed from Moscow? The policies are directed from Moscow, still you believe it should exist in this country as a political party?

Mr. ODETS. I didn't say that.

Mr. VELDE. I am sorry. What was your recommendation with reference to outlawing the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. My recommendation was that any party or any group of people that wanted to stand as a political party in the United States had to stand up and move in the open and had to be willing to be counted in public.

Mr. VELDE. But by making that statement you don't mean to infer that the Communist Party should be such a recognized—

Mr. ODETS. I think, if you ask me, I think we need a liberal party in this country. I don't think the Communist Party is it, by the widest stretch of imagination. But when I talk this way, I am talking about the possibility of some kind of liberal labor party that I would like to see come into existence. If I may say so, the foolish position of a man like myself is that he has no party to belong to. And I think that I share this foolish, empty position with thousands of sincere and earnest-thinking liberals in the United States. We have no party to join because we cannot give our allegiance to the Communist Party. So when I talk to you this way, I am talking from that background of feeling.

Mr. WALTER. You feel that the Democratic Party is too reactionary for you?

Mr. ODETS. I don't think I said that, sir.

Mr. WALTER. There is a very clear inference.

Mr. ODETS. We know that there are all sorts of groups within the Democratic Party.

Mr. WALTER. Yes. For which I apologize every 2 years.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you photostatic copies of several pages from the September 1939 issue of Soviet Russia Today. Page 24 contains the text of an open letter calling for closer cooperation with the Soviet Union. Will you examine the document and state whether your name appears on page 25?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir; my name is there.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you tell the committee who solicited your signature to that letter and the circumstances under which it was obtained?

Mr. ODETS. Again you have my word, Mr. Tavenner, that I have no memory of this at all.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you a letterhead of the United Office and Professional Workers of America, local 16, dated February 1, 1940. This is a committee sponsoring the fifth annual stenographers' ball. Your name appears thereon as one of the sponsors. Will you tell the committee who solicited your sponsorship and the circumstances.

Mr. ODETS. I am going to guess it was some stenographer. I don't know.

Mr. TAVENNER. Are you acquainted with local 16 of the Professional Workers?

Mr. ODETS. No, I don't know what that is. No, I don't know what that is, Mr. Tavenner.

Mr. TAVENNER. Local 16 is a group that has been rather notorious in its activities as a part of the larger organization which was expelled by the CIO because of its Communist Party activities.

Mr. ODETS. I don't know about that, nothing about that.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you a pamphlet entitled "Youngville, U. S. A." published by the American Youth Congress. Your name appears therein as a member of the National Advisory Committee. Will you tell the committee the circumstances of your membership on the National Advisory Committee of this organization?

Mr. ODETS. I can't, sir. You throw me for a loss. You have me at a disadvantage. I don't know about this.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, will you examine it closely enough to refresh your recollection, if you can?

Mr. ODETS. No, I remember the name of the organization, the American Youth Congress. In fact, I think at that time it was the leading youth congress in the country. And again I remember it as a very broad front outfit. I see the advisory committee is a very broad one.

Mr. TAVENNER. You do recall, do you not, that the organization has been cited by the Attorney General as a front organization.

Mr. ODETS. No, this is my first knowledge of that, the fact that you say so.

Mr. TAVENNER. The Daily Worker of March 5, 1941, carries a statement in defense of the Communist Party. I hand it to you so you may examine it. I want to read a part of this statement. It is in this language.

Consequently, we, who are not Communists, whose concern goes beyond the preservation of their constitutional rights to the maintenance of the democratic way of life as a road into future, urge you, the President, to exercise your authority and influence, to prevent those under you from stimulating un-American actions against Communists by undemocratic utterances.

Your name appears as one of the signers. Will you tell the committee who solicited your signature and the circumstances?

Mr. ODETS. This, I can. I am sorry, I can't and because I don't remember.

Mr. TAVENNER. The date, as you see, is March 5, 1941. Among those who state that they are not Communists in that article are Theodore Dreiser, Tom Mooney, Albert Maltz, Frederick V. Field, Samuel Ornitz, and Doxey Wilkerson and also Dr. Dirk J. Struik. Can you point out the reason for the signing of such a statement by those persons claiming not to be members of the Communist Party, being disinterested individuals on the subject of communism?

Mr. ODETS. No; I can't tell you about that because I don't know about it. I see there are three or four or five hundred signatures here, and many of these people obviously are not. A large majority of them are not, in my opinion.

Mr. TAVENNER. And some who are obviously members of the Communist Party, who say they are not.

Mr. ODETS. Well, these people apparently have since been proven to be Communists. I don't know either way.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you a photostatic copy of the letterhead of the Citizens' Committee for Harry Bridges dated April 24, 1941. Your name appears as a sponsor. Will you tell the committee how your sponsorship of this group was obtained?

Mr. ODETS. I would guess that I was written to or telephoned sometime when I was in California. I have no memory of this.

Mr. TAVENNER. You have no further recollection?

Mr. ODETS. No. I am sorry; I don't.

Mr. TAVENNER. Are you of the opinion that the effort to deport Harry Bridges constituted an attack on organized labor as well as an attack on the rights of minorities as claimed in that letter?

Mr. ODETS. I don't know what the letter claims. I have no opinion about it. I know very little about Harry Bridges and what he is about.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, if you authorize the use of your name, which you say you may have done to that letter, you should have some opinion regarding the contents which you authorized to go out over your signature.

Mr. ODETS. I am just trying to see what this says. I was looking at this letter, it says:

Mr. Bridges has been tried a second time on the pretext of a new law passed after an exhaustive hearing and acquittal by Dean Landis.

I would sign this on the basis of the Landis report which was an exhaustive one. Now my memory comes back on it.

Mr. TAVENNER. That may be your view on that point, but my question related to its being an attack on all organized labor as well as on the rights of minorities. That was the view taken in that letter. I am interested in the reason for such an assertion.

Mr. ODETS. I did not make that assertion. I cannot defend it because I am not really familiar with the subject. I cannot defend that assertion.

Mr. TAVENNER. No doubt you are familiar with the Communist slogans which became popular during the early days of the European war, when the war between Germany and England was an "imperialist war," when the Communist Party took the position and prepared



slogans stating that the "Yanks are not coming." Did you express any opinions on the war when Germany attacked Russia on June 22, 1941?

Mr. ODETS. I have no memory of that, sir, but I have memory of what my stand was. I did say to you once off the record that, when our great President Franklin Roosevelt sent his first warning letters to Mussolini and Hitler, I as a citizen of our country wrote President Roosevelt a letter, and it happened to be the only time I ever got an answer. I got a small friendly note. So my stand, as unimportant as it is, my stand is recorded by this little note. And it was opposed to the stand that you just read me about. I did not think that Russia's opinion had anything to do with making our foreign policy.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did the attack, in your mind, of Germany upon Russia have any bearing on your opinion?

Mr. ODETS. I was of the opinion from 1935 on, if you are interested in my small opinion, I was of the opinion that we would have to fight Hitler. I didn't see how the United States could stay out of it, because we were in the line of direct threat. This was always my opinion and it did not change.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you the August 1941 issue of Soviet Russia Today. Will you look at page 18 under statements by noted people, and read the statement by Clifford Odets.

Mr. ODETS. Well, sir, this statement in no way contradicts what I just said.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you read it, please?

Mr. ODETS. It says, "The first battlefield of the world against Fascist barbarism is now being held by the Soviet Union. In the name of humanity, no person or group of persons must prevent or dissuade us from the high purpose of lending all possible aid to the brave Russian fighters."

Sir, my memory is that that was the policy of the United States Government shortly thereafter.

Mr. TAVENNER. To whom did you make that statement?

Mr. ODETS. I have no idea.

Mr. TAVENNER. Prior to June 22, 1941, what was your position with regard to the United States entering the war?

Mr. ODETS. My best memory is that steadily—I am a little embarrassed talking about these great world problems as if it mattered what I thought about them—but my memory is that I told you that I simply felt that Hitlerism was the great danger of the world and we would have to fight it. I know the Communist Party line did a number of flipflops there. They were of no interest to me, and I had no connection with them.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you a photostatic copy, pages 20 and 21, of the June 1943 issue of Soviet Russia Today. This was a letter released by the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship. Your name appears among those who signed that letter. Will you tell the committee the circumstances under which your signature was obtained?

Mr. ODETS. I don't remember that, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you—

Mr. ODETS. This, of course, sir, was the time—I am guessing from the signatures, which constitute a roster of some of our very dis-



tinguished citizens—this was certainly at a time when we were all-out in our aid to the Soviet Union during the war.

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes; you are acquainted with the fact, however, that the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship was a well-recognized Communist-front organization as cited by the Attorney General. Of course, the citation had not been made at that time. But you are acquainted with the fact that it was subsequently cited as a front organization; are you not?

Mr. ODETS. I hear you say so, and I take your word for it. I don't know about it. I simply assume that you are telling me the truth; that is all.

Mr. TAVENNER. Hadn't you known that before my mentioning it to you today?

Mr. ODETS. No, sir, because I hadn't closely followed these things, and much that you tell me is news and information to me.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you the Daily Worker for April 22, 1946. On page 4 there is a list of names of persons who supported the May Day parade. Your name appears on the list.

Mr. ODETS. This came up before, and I told you that I had no memory of this, and I was extremely doubtful about it because this is in New York, and those were the days when I was in Hollywood for 4 or 4½ years.

Mr. TAVENNER. How do you account for the fact that your name is used in that connection?

Mr. ODETS. I have no idea. I am certain that I was not in New York, that I was in California. What I would have to do with the May Day parade in New York City, I have no way of knowing. It sounds just a little impossible to me.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were you acquainted with Hanns Eisler?

Mr. ODETS. Yes; I knew him.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you the Daily Worker for September 26, 1947. On page 12 there is an article regarding Hanns Eisler, and lists a number of persons who expressed strong interest in the case. Your name appears on the list. What was your interest in Hanns Eisler's case?

Mr. ODETS. I met Hanns Eisler first in New York City in 1939 or 1940, as a—I met him as a very gifted composer, and later had the pleasure of employing him to write music for a play of mine, Night Music, for which he wrote a very gifted score. We developed a friendship. Then, when I later went out to California and began to not only write but to direct movies, I was interested naturally in getting the best musical score that I could, and I asked the studio RKO to hire Hanns Eisler for a picture I directed called None But the Lonely Heart, and we remained friends. When he was in trouble, as a friend I tried to help him. I knew him as a totally nonpolitical figure. I saw him a number of times in Hollywood. I knew he had indulged in no political activity of any sort, that he lived very quietly, that he was essentially an artist, and I saw him and recognized him as a friend.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then it was purely on a personal basis that you were interested in that case?

Mr. ODETS. Absolutely, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. The Civil Rights Congress held a national convention in Chicago during November 1947. The cover program reflects

your name as a sponsor. Can you tell the committee about your sponsorship of that organization?

Mr. ODETS. I don't know about this, sir, except that I see some very good tunes. As I put it before—that is, I am talking from a liberal point of view—but how or when I signed this I have no way of remembering.

Mr. TAVENNER. Are you affiliated in any manner with the National Council of Arts, Sciences and Professions?

Mr. ODETS. I believe I am—what would you call it—a sponsor or executive board member or councilman? I don't know. I think I am an officer of that organization.

Mr. TAVENNER. According to a letterhead of the organization dated July 28, 1950, you were a member of the board of directors.

Mr. ODETS. That would be correct, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. What were the circumstances under which you became a member of that organization?

Mr. ODETS. Again this would be by invitation through mail, or by telegram. I cannot remember the exact circumstances.

Mr. TAVENNER. According to the Daily Worker of October 24, 1949, the New York State Council of the Arts, Sciences and Professions sponsored a meeting at St. Nicholas Arena, October 27, regarding the conviction of the 11 Communist leaders. You are listed as one of the speakers. Did you speak on that occasion?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir; I did.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who solicited you to take part in that meeting?

Mr. ODETS. My best memory there would be, as I remember, I think Sid Benson came to my house and asked me to speak there.

Mr. TAVENNER. Sid Benson is the same person as Ted Wellman?

Mr. ODETS. That is right.

Mr. TAVENNER. What representations did Ted Wellman make to you?

Mr. ODETS. Well, I distinctly remember that I asked him very carefully—this was a broad-front affair—that if it were a Communist meeting I would not speak there. He assured me it was not, since the Arts, Sciences, and Professions Council was sponsoring it. This convinced me that he was speaking the truth, and I went there to make a brief statement.

Mr. TAVENNER. You knew Wellman was a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. ODETS. I did not know that then. I mean in the sense that I did not know if he were any longer a Communist Party member. I still don't know that he is.

Mr. TAVENNER. But you know that he was a member at the time that you were a member of the party?

Mr. ODETS. I think he was; yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you discuss communism with him at that time to a greater extent than to inquire whether this was a Communist-sponsored meeting?

Mr. ODETS. No: I didn't discuss that with him, but I went to the meeting; I made a very brief talk, and I started the talk by saying that I am not a Communist. This was my opening remark. I have, since speaking to you last, read over the speech, and I now know distinctly what I signed. And the content of this very brief speech was

that to fight for the right of any legally recognized minority political party was good old-fashioned solid American practice.

Mr. TAVENNER. That brings us back into the discussion again as to whether or not the Communist Party is a political party in the sense of which you used it or whether it is a conspiratorial group designed to overthrow the Government of the United States. That is a very basic matter.

Mr. ODETS. If I may, I would like to stand on the record of what I said, and that I have no intention of defending the Communist Party.

Mr. TAVENNER. In discussing this meeting with Wellman, did you ask him whether he was still a member of the party, or did he state whether or not he was still a member of the party?

Mr. ODETS. What happened there, sir, is very clear in my memory. I was in a sickbed and he contacted me something like 7 o'clock at night. I was not announced to speak there. Six-thirty or 7 o'clock at night he came around and contacted me and I did not want to go. I got off my sickbed and did go. There wasn't very much discussion, in fact he had to help me into a taxicab to get there.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you discuss communism in the course of your trip to and from the place of speaking?

Mr. ODETS. No; in no way.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, did Wellman state to you that he was still a member of the Communist Party, or did you ask him any question relating to his Communist Party membership?

Mr. ODETS. No; I didn't. I am certain none of this matter came up.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you the report of the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace held in New York City in March 1949. On page 146 of this report you are listed as one of the sponsors. Did you attend or participate in this conference?

Mr. ODETS. Yes, sir; I did. I spoke at it.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who solicited your sponsorship of that meeting?

Mr. ODETS. This could only be by mail, in this case by special-delivery mail, I am sure, but I would not remember who sent that to me. It was undoubtedly one of the heads of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions Council.

Mr. TAVENNER. The World Congress for Peace was held in Paris in April 1949. According to a circular you were a member of the American sponsoring committee. Will you tell the committee the circumstances of your connection with this group?

Mr. ODETS. This I do not remember, but if I had felt that it were a continuation of the Waldorf-Astoria affair I might have lent my name to it. Otherwise I have no memory of it.

Mr. TAVENNER. The American Continental Congress for World Peace was held in Mexico City in September 1949. According to the Daily Worker of July 29, 1949, at page 5, you were one of the endorsers of that meeting. How was your support solicited for that meeting?

Mr. ODETS. Again, it could only be done through mail or by telegram or perhaps a cable, I don't know.

Mr. TAVENNER. You have no further recollection of it?

Mr. ODETS. I have no recollection. I have usually been very careful about anything that emanated from a European source in terms of a statement or where a signature was needed. I certainly did not attend either of these affairs.



Mr. TAVENNER. According to the Daily People's World of March 1, 1948, on page 5, you were a member of a committee sponsoring a banquet to raise funds for the defense of the Hollywood writers who had been cited for contempt of Congress. Inasmuch as you were not in Hollywood at that time, but had returned to New York, will you tell the committee how your support for that organization was solicited?

Mr. ODETS. This was a very large broad front committee. In fact, I see it is called the Committee of One Thousand. This would be done through the usual means of a letter or telegram.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who was it that wrote you or telegraphed you?

Mr. ODETS. I am sorry, I don't remember.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was it any group with which you had previously had connection or association?

Mr. ODETS. It might have been the ASCP but I don't actually know.

Mr. VELDE. Were you active in any other way, supporting or defending the Hollywood 10?

Mr. ODETS. Very little. I would think this would be the only way.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, do you have any other recollections about doing anything else? Did you come to Washington or visit with any of them?

Mr. ODETS. Definitely not. Nothing of any large nature.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, you say nothing of any large nature.

Mr. ODETS. Well, coming to Washington, for instance, would have been something of a large nature. No, I maybe signed that, and I might have signed another document. I don't remember.

(Witness conferred with his counsel.)

Mr. ODETS. Mr. Gressman reminds me of my signature on an amicus brief to the court. I should think that that would constitute all of my connection with the matter.

Mr. VELDE. Did you talk to anyone about that brief before you signed it?

Mr. ODETS. My memory of that is that was a concerted Screen Writers' Guild effort, that is my memory of that, and a vote would be taken on the floor at the Screen Writers' Guild in Hollywood, shall we sign this or shall we not. And I went along with it.

Mr. TAVENNER. You didn't attend that meeting, I take it?

Mr. ODETS. It is possible that I did. I think I must have, if I signed it.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, you were living, as I understand it, in New York at that time. You would remember if you made a trip to Hollywood, wouldn't you?

Mr. ODETS. Well, if I were in Hollywood I would have attended the meeting. If I were in New York I did not attend the meeting and my signature must have been obtained by mail, by some sort of mailing.

Mr. TAVENNER. Let me see if I can refresh your recollection as to several other connections you had with the Hollywood 10, which was just referred to.

I beg your pardon, this does not relate to the Hollywood 10, it relates to the 12 Communist leaders who were tried in New York. According to the Daily Worker of February 28, 1949, a Committee for



Free Political Advocacy was formed for the defense of the 12 Communist leaders who had been indicted. This committee released a statement demanding that the Government stop the prosecution of these Communists. Your name appears as one of the signers of that. Will you tell the committee the circumstances under which your assistance was obtained in that matter?

Mr. ODETS. I have no memory of that. I see the first line says:

Chief Justice James H. Wolf of Utah yesterday denounced the Government's prosecution of the national communist leaders.

I know nothing about it. It seems again to be the broadest front sort of thing, and it is possible I signed it. You say my name is here?

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes.

Mr. ODETS. I may have signed it, but I have no memory of it.

Mr. TAVENNER. What do you mean by referring to that article as being the character of the broadest front?

Mr. ODETS. Well, there are simply so many names of liberals on it. There are so many of our distinguished citizens who have signed this, that I cannot see it as a Communist affair at all.

Mr. TAVENNER. But it was in the defense of Communists, and we are interested in knowing how your support was obtained, whether it was obtained through the Communist Party or persons working through the party.

Mr. ODETS. I would say that most of these, sir, came through the Arts, Sciences, and Professions, on mimeographed sheets with one, two, or three signatures, as they frequently did.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you a photostatic copy of the letterhead of the National Nonpartisan Committee To Defend the Rights of the 12 Communist Leaders. Your name appears thereon as a member. Do you recall your membership in that organization?

Mr. ODETS. No, I have no recollection even of the name, National Nonpartisan Committee.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, do you remember participating in the work of that organization?

Mr. ODETS. No, I am certain I didn't participate in the work. If my signature is here, I must have signed it.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who approached you for your signature, solicited your signature?

Mr. ODETS. Again, this could only be through the usual methods. If they were in a hurry it was a special-delivery letter, and otherwise it was an ordinary postal letter.

Mr. TAVENNER. According to the Daily Worker of June 23, 1949, the Civil Rights Conference held a conference on civil and human rights to be held the following Saturday to discuss ways and means of taking action on behalf of the 11 Communists. You are reported as one of those issuing the call for this conference. Will you tell the committee what prompted you to join in the issuance of the call for a conference by the Civil Rights Congress?

Mr. ODETS. Well, I would have joined it only in the defense of civil liberties.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who solicited your participation in that conference, or rather your issuance of the call?

Mr. ODETS. Again I have no memory of it, except that it would have come through the usual mail of the morning.

Mr. TAVENNER. According to the Daily Worker of May 12, 1950, at page 12, a petition was filed with the United Nations to investigate contempt citations, and I use the term, by way of quotation, by the "House Un-American Committee," which is the term by which the committee is usually called when used by a Communist organization.

Mr. ODETS. You brought this up before, and I can only say that I not only have no memory of it, but it is impossible that I signed it, because the whole conception of appealing to the U. N. is just a nutty idea. I couldn't possibly have signed it. I couldn't agree with such nonsense.

Mr. TAVENNER. Your name appears on it, and we are asking the explanation of why your name appears.

Mr. ODETS. On this one, I deny my name on it. The idea is just nutty.

Mr. TAVENNER. What is your explanation of the way in which your signature was obtained?

Mr. ODETS. I don't know.

Mr. WALTER. Do you feel it was nutty because Russia was a part of it?

Mr. ODETS. No, to appeal; the citizens of the United States, to appeal to the U. N. for something happening in the United States is just foolish, in my opinion.

Mr. TAVENNER. According to the Daily Worker of June 22, 1950, page 10, the National Council of Arts, Sciences, and Professions conducted a town rally to free Hollywood writers convicted of contempt of Congress. You are listed as having wired the organization as follows:

I believe that yours is truly the American way and salute you all in the name of your convictions and courage.

Do you remember sending that telegram?

Mr. ODETS. My best guess would be that I did send this telegram.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you send the telegram because you believed that the Hollywood 10 were not in contempt of Congress?

Mr. ODETS. No, I felt that they—I, by the way, did not agree with their stand. But I felt that it was very American to fight, to fight for what you conceived to be your constitutional rights, and I felt impelled and moved to send this wire, and I did not agree with their stand.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then why did you send this telegram praising them so highly for the stand they were taking?

Mr. ODETS. I thought they were making a good fight and by the way, I must tell you frankly that at that I did not believe that a number of them were Communists. I, for instance, must tell you that in Hollywood I was very frequently with one of the finest human beings I had ever met. That is Adrian Scott. I could not believe that some of these were members of the Communist Party. I thought some of these people were being prosecuted for what they were not, and I later was surprised to learn that apparently all of them were Communists. I did not have many who were friends of Hollywood, but Adrian certainly astounded me.

Mr. TAVENNER. I show you a photostatic copy of page 7 of the Daily Worker of August 23, 1937. Apparently this was on the occasion of your return to New York from Hollywood, and considerable space was given to you and your plays in that article. The article evidently

represents an interview by a reporter for the Daily Worker. In this article you are identified as Clifford Odets, well-known left-wing playwright. According to the article, you were questioned as to whether you had made an effort to turn out scenarios with social content while in Hollywood. You will observe that you were quoted as saying:

Well, I got away with some stuff in *The General Dies at Dawn* and in the other two scripts that I did, *The River Is Blue* and *Gettysburg*, but they have been careful with me. They go over my stuff with a fine-tooth comb. It is difficult to do anything with social significance.

Do you recall the interview that is related there, or did you have such an interview?

MR. ODETS. I remember reading this from your hands a few weeks ago, and saying that I thought the whole matter was nonsense because *The General Dies at Dawn* is a picture that starred Gary Cooper and done by Paramount. There was nothing of any subversive or propaganda nature in it. *Gettysburg* is a picture in which Abraham Lincoln is the hero. And *The River Is Blue* I did not write. Therefore, I couldn't have made this statement to speak specifically about what is in it. To speak generally, I go to Hollywood to make a living, not to write something, while I am making a living, not to demean or disgrace American people as I believe many people do. But to make an honest living after writing entertaining scripts. I have never gone to Hollywood as a propagandist. I think nothing gets by anybody in Hollywood. I don't think Hollywood has ever made a movie with left propaganda in it. And I think the whole matter of social messages from Hollywood has been talked about in relation to something that really cannot happen. All scripts are carefully written and rewritten and gone over with fine combs in Hollywood, and I never in my life had any intention of going to Hollywood and making a two million dollar picture which was a propaganda picture. This is simply such a contradiction in terms that the idea is just a silly one.

MR. WOOD. Then it is finally your conclusion that you were misquoted?

MR. ODETS. I am misquoted all the way through there. I suppose if the interview took place it could not have been a friendly interview, because when I look at the top of it, it very sneeringly refers to me as a man who gave up his career and went to Hollywood to make his gold. The opening of the interview is extremely unfriendly. So if it were, I could not have been very friendly with the interviewer.

MR. WOOD. Did the contents of it come to your attention at that time?

MR. ODETS. No, sir, Mr. Tavenner brought that to my attention some 3 or 4 weeks ago when I was here.

MR. WOOD. Was that the first knowledge you had that you were misquoted?

MR. ODETS. That was my first knowledge of it.

MR. TAVENNER. Do you recall that an interview took place with the person whose name is mentioned as the interviewer?

MR. ODETS. I think it says Burns. No, I don't know who that is. May I see that again, please.

I have no idea who that is, and I have no memory of the interview—1937, that is 14 years ago. I was quoted as saying, "Social drama isn't dying, it never really lived." That is what he quotes me as say-



ing. He says I was lured away from Broadway horns by Hollywood gold. I have no memory of it.

Mr. WALTER. As a matter of fact, isn't the screening so thorough on that it would be an utter impossibility to slant a picture? There are so many people that examine it for that particular purpose? Isn't that the fact?

Mr. ODETS. You are right. There is nothing less possible in Hollywood. Nothing less possible.

Mr. WALTER. And has that not always been the fact?

Mr. ODETS. Ever since I have been there.

Mr. WALTER. Has the industry not endeavored to set up sort of a sinecure, as it were?

Mr. ODETS. They have always done that.

Mr. WALTER. In order to determine whether or not an attempt has been made to get an improper message?

Mr. ODETS. They have always been very, very favorable about that.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now, I want to go back and ask you a question regarding your plays *Waiting for Lefty* and *'Til the Day I Die*. I show you another pamphlet entitled "Guide to Readings on Communism," issued by the Workers' Bookshop. On the inside of the front cover you will find this statement:

This guide has been compiled to help those workers, students, and intellectuals who are finding their way to communism. The titles of books and pamphlets included in this pamphlet are by no means complete. What we have attempted to do here is to list the minimum required readings for an understanding of the fundamental, theoretical, and practical questions facing the international as well as the American revolutionary movement.

Then on page 19 you will find listed the two plays of yours, *Waiting for Lefty* and *'Til the Day I Die*, and they are described as two of the important revolutionary plays. I call that to your attention to show that as early as 1937 those particular works of yours were on the required reading and study curriculum, you may say, of the Communist Party. Do you have any comment to make on that?

Mr. ODETS. I would say that they would have that use. As early as 1937 they, of course, were on the Wilson Library index and were required reading in most of the colleges and universities of the United States. I said yesterday and will say again that one of the reasons I left the Communist Party was that I did not want my work or my meaning to be narrowed down to their meaning. Here in this pamphlet they narrowed down the meaning of what I write to their meaning. I have always wanted to speak more broadly and more freely and not be connected with this narrow meaning. I would much rather be taught and have my plays as required reading in American universities than I would have it in this pamphlet.

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Odets, these various documents that I have presented to you by no means complete the record of your activities and affiliations, as appears from the record of our committee. They are the principal ones. But you are now aware of this information which we are in possession of. It is the record that we have.

You say you joined the Communist Party in 1935 and remained a party member only a few months. I think probably 9 months. You also say that your break with the Communist Party was complete and final. How do you reconcile your statement that your break with the Communist Party was complete and final with this record of



affiliation with Communist-front organizations as shown by these exhibits?

MR. ODETS. Well, I will say again, as I said before, Mr. Tavenner, that the lines of leftism, liberalism, in all of their shades and degrees, are constantly crossing like a jangled chord on a piano. It is almost impossible to pick out which note is which note. I have spoken out on what I thought were certain moral issues of the day, and I found myself apparently in line with your documentation, I have found myself frequently on platforms with Communists that I did not know about then but evidently are now known Communists. I have said before that many of these people have some very good tunes. They have picked up some of our most solemn and sacred American tunes and they sing them. If I as an American liberal must sometimes speak out the same tune, I must sometimes find myself on platforms, so to speak, with strange bedfellows. I have never wittingly, since these early days, have ever wittingly, joined or spoken on an exclusively Communist program or platform, not to my knowledge. I see that one must do one of two things. One must pick one's way very carefully through the mazes of liberalism and leftism today or one must remain silent. Of the two, I must tell you frankly I would try to pick the first way, because the little that I have to say, the little that I have to contribute to the betterment or welfare of the American people could not permit me to remain silent.

MR. VELDE. Mr. Odets, would you, if you had this to do over again—that is, join all of these Communist-front groups—would you do it at the present time? Would you sponsor the same things that you call liberalism and so forth?

MR. ODETS. I do not think I would sponsor many of them. I would pick very carefully and would be careful where I put my signature.

MR. VELDE. Which one of these organizations would you continue to sponsor?

MR. ODETS. I cannot say at the moment, but what I would like to do, if I had a program for the future, what I would like to do would be, if there were organizations that stood for what liberals stood for, if they were Communist dominated or controlled, I would like to wrest away from the Communists their control of these organizations, one or two of them. I mean, I do not know right now to what extent an organization like the Arts, Sciences, and Professions Committee or Council is Communist dominated, because it is a valuable organization, but with many fine, outstanding citizens in it, I would like to wrest control of it away from the Communists.

MR. VELDE. But do you still support it in its present constituency?

MR. ODETS. I mean honestly to go back to New York City and make an earnest and sincere investigation of the organizations, particularly in regard to that one organization. Of all of these—

MR. VELDE. Until you do make that investigation, you are going to continue to support the organization?

MR. ODETS. I am going to make the investigation immediately.

MR. WOOD. Any further questions, Mr. Counsel?

MR. TAVENNER. No, sir.

MR. WOOD. Any reason why the witness should not be excused from further attendance before the committee?

MR. TAVENNER. No, sir, I think not.

Mr. WOOD. Very well. It is so ordered. The committee will stand in recess until 2:30 this afternoon.

(Whereupon, at 12:30 p. m., the committee was recessed until 2:30 p. m. the same day.)

#### AFTERNOON SESSION

(The subcommittee of the Committee on Un-American Activities reconvened at 2:40 p. m., Representative John S. Wood (chairman), Francis E. Walter, and Harold L. Velde being present.)

Mr. WOOD. Come to order, please. The same subcommittee of this morning will be for this afternoon session. Mr. Velde and Mr. Wood are present, and Mr. Walter will be in in a moment.

Who do you have?

Mr. TAVENNER. Isobel Lennart, please.

Mr. WOOD. You do solemnly swear the evidence you shall give to this subcommittee shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Miss LENNART. I do.

#### TESTIMONY OF ISOBEL LENNART

Mr. WOOD. Are you represented by counsel?

Miss LENNART. I have seen counsel but I don't think I need him to be with me.

Mr. WOOD. In the event you determine that you need counsel, you may have him.

Miss LENNART. Thank you.

Mr. TAVENNER. What is your name, please?

Miss LENNART. Isobel Lennart.

Mr. TAVENNER. Where were you born?

Miss LENNART. New York City.

Mr. TAVENNER. Where do you reside now?

Miss LENNART. Malibu, Calif.

Mr. TAVENNER. Give us the name again?

Miss LENNART. Malibu, Calif.

Mr. TAVENNER. Are you here in pursuance to a subpoena?

Miss LENNART. No, Mr. Tavenner, I am here at my own request. I asked the committee for a hearing, and they said anyone who had ever been a Communist and wished to get the record straight on himself would have the privilege of coming here, and I took advantage of it. May I say something about this, though, because a year ago, May 1951, a year ago, Mr. Wheeler, the investigator for the committee came to see me. He had a subpoena for me at that time. He did not serve it, I am pretty sure, because I was in the third month of a pregnancy. Shall I go on? I would like to tell about this whole thing.

Mr. TAVENNER. Make any explanation that you desire.

Miss LENNART. There is a particular reason why I wish to. When Mr. Wheeler came to see me he asked me if I cared to discuss it with him—he thought evidently at that time that I was going to testify—if I would care to discuss with him what my position would be, and I said "Yes," I certainly would, that I would tell the truth about myself and my past associations, and that I did not think that I would name names, nor did I at that time, for reasons which I would rather discuss later if I may.

Mr. Wheeler called me a day later and said that the committee would like to withdraw the subpoena because of my condition, and I resisted this quite strongly. For one thing, I had been waiting for a subpoena for a long, long time and I wanted to get it over with, and I was up to here. I felt all right, but he had much better judgment, I found out. My doctor urged me very strongly to let him withdraw it for the time being, and at the end of 2 or 3 days of arguing with my husband and Dr. So-and-So, Mr. Wheeler promised me that this was not considered an evasion that I was using.

I want to say that his judgment was a lot better than mine. It turned out to be a miserable pregnancy, and it ended very well. I don't think it would have if I had testified, and I am very, very grateful to Mr. Wheeler and the committee for being so considerate on something so important to me. But here I am, and this time I asked of my own accord. I was not notified that I would be subpoenaed.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then you are appearing here today at your own request and voluntarily.

Miss LENNART. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, I assume, in your appearance here, you desire to tell the committee about your own connection with the Communist Party, and all you know about its operations, or otherwise you would not have come.

Miss LENNART. Exactly. I feel the time has come when I want to get it straightened out, as to exactly what my past associations have been and why I have repudiated them.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, before you so testify for the committee, let me ask you, what is your profession?

Miss LENNART. I am a screen writer.

Mr. TAVENNER. A screen writer. How long have you been a screen writer?

Miss LENNART. Since 1941, about 11 years, roughly I guess.

Mr. TAVENNER. During that period of time what type of screen writing have you engaged in?

Miss LENNART. Well, I usually write right from the beginning to the end of the picture, the story and screen play. Most of my credits are of that type. They are mostly very light and frothy pictures, largely musicals.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you give us the names, please, of the principal screen credits which you have received for plays which have been produced.

Miss LENNART. Yes. Lost Angel, Anchors Aweigh, Stranger in Town, Hardy Affair, Hardy in Mexico, Kissing Bandit, East Side-West Side, A Life of Her Own. I think those are the released pictures.

Mr. TAVENNER. For what producers have you worked?

Miss LENNART. Producers, or studios?

Mr. TAVENNER. Studios, I meant to say.

Miss LENNART. I have been under contract only to one studio since 1941, and that is Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. I have been loaned out on one or two occasions to RKO, and Twentieth Century Fox. But my entire working life has been spent at MGM.

Mr. TAVENNER. When did you first go to Hollywood?

Miss LENNART. I went out in 1937. I was in the very beginning of my twenties and I wanted to be a director in pictures. I hoped to start



by being a script clerk. I had just gotten out of college and the first job I could get was in the stenographic department at MGM, where I worked for about a year. I later became a script clerk and eventually sold my first story and I have been writing ever since.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now, will you tell the committee, after giving us that background, just how you became a member of the Communist Party and what your experience was within the party?

Miss LENNART. Well, when I was first out in Hollywood, I must say I don't want to be making excuses for myself, but it was the first time I had ever been away from home, except for college. I knew nobody in the entire town. I had this tough job in New York and this one took no training at all. I think I was signing fan mail letters or something of the sort. I was feeling completely useless as a human being. I wasn't doing anything for anybody but myself. This was during the rise of nazism which terrified me as it did many other people, and I talked about it a great deal and I felt as if I wanted to do something about it, not just talk.

I met a reader at the studios, whose name was Jessie Burns——

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the name?

Miss LENNART. Jessie Burns, who was very kind and very friendly to me, and, as I say, I knew no one, and who, maybe, made me believe or convinced me that everybody was talking about nazism but only the Communist Party was trying in an organized way to do something about it. We talked about it a great deal and I was very interested because this fear was a very real one, as it should have been, I think.

Jessie told me about a studio group that was being formed which would consist of people who were not members of the Communist Party, although it would be under the auspices of the party, and that its purpose was to discuss current events, economics and so on, including the whole question of Hitlerism and what could be done about it, and suggested that I join this class, which I did. It was a class of seven or eight people, and this was, I would say, I think in 1938. It was a long time ago. There were about six or seven or eight people. I would say I have never seen any one of these people again. I think they were mostly white-collar workers but none from my own studio.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you recall the names of any of them?

Miss LENNART. No; we used first names in this group. I must give an explanation. I only went to three or four meetings of this class. I dropped out of it. I do remember the last name of the man who taught the class, whose name was Silver. I have never been able to remember the first name.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you recall his first name?

Miss LENNART. No, Mr. Tavenner, I don't.

Mr. TAVENNER. Can you give us an idea of the approximate age of the individual at that time?

Miss LENNART. Anybody over 30 seemed ancient to me. I have changed about this since, but he was a comparatively young man. I would guess that he was in his thirties, possible middle or late. He was very, very thin, the thinnest man I have ever seen in this world, if it would help identify him, and very unhealthy looking.

Mr. TAVENNER. Where did these study groups meet?

Miss LENNART. They met at people's apartments, and I am sorry to say that my reason for dropping out was exactly that. They had



been at my apartment, all of the meetings I went to, because I was the only member of the group who lived alone, and I didn't have the problem of little brothers or husbands and so on to be bothered with.

At the end of four meetings or three, I am not sure which, this location was inconvenient for other people in the group, and the next meeting place was set quite far downtown in Hollywood. I didn't drive and I worked all day and it just got to be too much of a hustle to try to get to a late evening meeting, and I dropped out of the group at that time. However, I didn't stop worrying about the fact that I was doing nothing but going to the studio and coming home at 6 o'clock and that was that, and things were going on in the world around me. I changed studios at that time and went over to Fox, where I started with script. But I continued seeing Jessie Burns and the people I had met through her, Madelaine Ruthven was one.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you say Madelaine Ruthven?

Miss LENNART. Ruthven. And I continued worrying about the fact that I should be doing something and not just talking. The people I met through Jessie were people who seem to lead far more active and useful lives than I did. After a period of time I told Jessie that I was willing to join the Communist Party. She asked and I said that I was, and I did. And I have gone completely blank on what date this was. May I look at my notes, please? I can't remember what date it was.

This was either at the extreme end of 1938 but I think more likely the beginning of 1939.

Nothing happened for quite a while. I said I would join the Communist Party and I never heard anything more for months, because no new member class was starting. The way it used to work was that all people went into a new member class, and there was a series of lectures and material to read and so on, and then they were assigned to groups. But no such group was formed. I think, as I remember, the reason was that there was no teacher available. It was very difficult to get people to give their time to teach these classes. It was some months later I was assigned to a group without having been in a new member class.

Mr. TAVENNER. When you were assigned to this group, who did you find were members of it?

Miss LENNART. This is the one thing I want to be sure I have right. People I recall in these very early meetings were Maurice Murphy, Betty Anderson.

Mr. TAVENNER. Can you give us further identifying information regarding Maurice Murphy?

Miss LENNART. He was a young actor. It has been years since I have seen him. I have never seen him in Hollywood for 10 years. Certainly that long. But at that time he was an actor. And Betty Anderson later became Betty Wilson.

Mr. TAVENNER. And she testified in the hearings in California—

Miss LENNART. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Regarding her own Communist Party membership and her reasons for leaving the party.

Miss LENNART. Yes, the same. Nora and George Hallgren.

Mr. TAVENNER. Spell the last name.

Miss LENNART. I think that is H-a-l-l-g-r-e-n.

Mr. TAVENNER. Can you give us further identifying information regarding them?

MISS LENNART. I never knew whether Nora Hallgren worked or not. I understood she was a semi-invalid. Her husband, George Hallgren, worked at Twentieth Century Fox, where I now was working, in the credit union there for a year or so. Again these people I have never seen again.

And Joe Bromberg.

MR. TAVENNER. Bromberg?

MISS LENNART. B-r-o-m-b-e-r-g.

MR. TAVENNER. Can you give us further identification?

MISS LENNART. He was an actor.

MR. TAVENNER. He is now deceased.

MISS LENNART. Yes; I think this year or last year. Those are the people that I remember from this first group. My membership in this at the beginning was pretty much a token membership because just at this time I got my first script clerk job. I don't know if the committee knows what this job is. I believe I was the only script clerk to be a member of the Communist Party. That is a job that has brutal working hours. My normal day was leaving my house at 6:30 in the morning and I seldom got home until midnight.

MR. TAVENNER. What were your duties as a script clerk?

MISS LENNART. A script clerk prepares the picture, prepares the script for shooting in terms of putting together those sequences that are shot at one time, making all of the notes on costumes, sets that have to match, as you know. They often will shoot a long shot of a film one day and maybe often not get into the closer shots for 2 months later. All of the details of costume, movement of actors, dialog, and so forth, must match for cutting.

It is a very detailed job and when you are through at night, when the company has finished shooting, you prepare a series of sheets for the cutter who cuts his picture using your notes as a guide. But since I was the junior script clerk on the lot, I got the B pictures, Mr. Moto and Charlie Chan and Westerns and so on. Those were called 18-day, 18-night pictures. You shot all day and most of the night and the key crew remained the same. The rest of the working guys were on union shifts. But we stayed all the way through.

MR. TAVENNER. Did you have any responsibility in the preparation of the script?

MISS LENNART. The content of the script?

MR. TAVENNER. The content.

MISS LENNART. None at all. This is just a technical job. It is a kind of a left-handed assistant director. But because of this, for some months, I was able to attend almost no meetings. I think a top average would be once every 2 months, and this was a top on that.

I think there was also a problem of what to do with me because I didn't fit into any category, not as if I could fit into a writer's group or writer's work or so on. I think the people in the group, as I remember, were largely occupied with work in the Anti-Nazi League at that time.

MR. TAVENNER. Did you also work with the group in the Anti-Nazi League?

MISS LENNART. No, I didn't. I could not participate in any mass organization work because of the hours, because of night meetings. However, there was one organization only that I had a very brief

knowledge of. I was reproached for my lack of any activity. You know, I was just there. And they said——

Mr. TAVENNER. You mean you were reproached by fellow members of the Communist Party?

Miss LENNART. In the group, yes. Usually at a meeting. "What have you been doing? What is your activity? Are you working in a mass organization?" That sort of thing. And I wasn't and it was because of the hours. So they suggested that I might do some office work, and something called AFA, which was Associated Film Audiences. I was told that this was not a Communist organization, only I suppose in terms of behavior in the office and so on. I never met anybody there but another volunteer secretarial worker. I think I went about three times and licked envelopes in the office. They had followed awfully fast, I think because of the program which was a very ambitious one, and which was to organize film audiences to demand better pictures, better treatment of labor problems in pictures, better treatment of racial minorities in pictures, and so on, and to the best of my knowledge this organization didn't exist for more than a few months.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was there any other person connected with that organization who was known to you to be a member of the Communist Party?

Miss LENNART. I only met one other person there in my three visits and that, as I say, was a volunteer secretarial worker whose name I don't know, don't remember.

Mr. TAVENNER. What were the circumstances under which you were assigned? Was the subject brought up in a Communist Party meeting or by a Communist Party individual?

Miss LENNART. Yes, it was; by one of the people I have mentioned in this group. Which one I don't know. But, yes, it was brought up in a group. It was a suggestive activity because it was one place where I could go in to daytimes if I didn't have a full afternoon's work.

Mr. TAVENNER. In other words, it was a type of activity which was encouraged and suggested by the Communist Party?

Miss LENNART. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Your entrance into the party was prior to the Stalin-Hitler pact?

Miss LENNART. Yes, it was. I dropped out——

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you recall the making of that pact?

Miss LENNART. Yes, I do. I remember it very well because I stopped going to party meetings because of it. The explanation given in the party, after a lag in which no explanation was given, because I think they were caught short by it as anybody else was——

Mr. TAVENNER. I believe the date of the pact was August 23, 1939.

Miss LENNART. That is about what it would be. The explanation given to the party was that it was for the purpose of expediency, that Russia knew she was next on Hitler's list, and that it was to give her time to arm. It was not an explanation that I was able to accept. I had such a fear and hatred of nazism, that this was too much of a strange bedfellow combination for me. And so for some time I dropped out of the party completely and went to no meetings. However, when Germany did attack Russia, I felt that perhaps I had been mistaken. I was called by Madelaine Ruthven, who was a functionary



of the party at the time, and Madelaine reproached me for my lack of faith in the party, and said again that the aims of the party were no different from the aims of the American people, and it truly seemed so during these war years, and that this was the only place to work in an organized way against Hitlerism, against the things I didn't believe in.

I am sorry to say I started going to party meetings again. Even at this point she asked me to rejoin my original group, which I did. Incidentally, I don't ever remember being formally moved from this group. It split up a number of times. People drifted out and drifted in, and so on. I don't remember a formal move to another group.

I have not a great deal on the subject of names of people I knew in the party. I met hundreds of people in the years I have been in California, and about many of them it is impossible to remember where I met them and how and under what circumstances, and I know the committee does not want hearsay information. But I would like to give the names of those people I am sure, absolutely sure, I was in party groups with. I cannot identify the period of time, but I have made the best job I can of this.

Mr. TAVENNER. By party groups, are you referring to closed party meetings?

Miss LENNART. Yes, closed party meetings; exactly. Later on there were none, but when I joined the party, there were many open meetings at which we were always told that it was an open meeting and we were told that there would be people there who were not members of the party and not to assume that they were. That is why I am trying to be very definite about this.

Mr. TAVENNER. So you are differentiating between that type of meetings and closed meetings.

Miss LENNART. That is right. I am speaking about closed branch meetings. And the people who drifted in and out, whom I saw at various times, were Paul Jarrico—

Mr. TAVENNER. Paul Jarrico has been identified by numerous witnesses before the committee as a member of the Communist Party.

Miss LENNART. This is in addition to the people I have already named, of course.

George Sklar.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you give us additional descriptive information regarding him?

Miss LENNART. Mr. Sklar was a writer in Hollywood. I understood that he had been a playwright before. During this time I knew him he was a screen writer. That is all I know about him.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you know whether he is now working as a screen writer?

Miss LENNART. No, I don't, Mr. Tavenner. I haven't seen Mr. Sklar or heard about him for a number of years. All of my information dates up to a certain point and no further. Martin Berkeley, who has appeared before the committee; Lester Cole; Alvah Bessie; Gordon Kahn; Henry Blankfort; Herbert Biberman; George and Tiba Willner; Albert Maltz; Roland Kibbie. I would like to say that I met Mr. Kibbie very early in my party experience, at the end of 1938 or the beginning of 1939. I have never seen him again and was told way back that he got out shortly after the period I met him. I don't know where he is now or what he is doing.



MR. TAVENNER. Let me make a statement for the benefit of the record that Mr. Roland Kibbie has not appeared before the committee but when his name was mentioned in the course of the hearings in California he wired the committee that he would be available and desired to cooperate in this, and has talked with the staff.

MISS LENNART. Just to finish up on names of people I have known, the party functionaries besides Madelaine Ruthven, who I have already mentioned, were John Howard Lawson, who at that time was the head of the section, and a woman named Elizabeth Leech.

MR. TAVENNER. She is also a party functionary, as I understood it.

MISS LENNART. She was when I knew her, yes.

MR. TAVENNER. Were you acquainted with Richard Collins?

MISS LENNART. Yes, I knew Richard Collins. But I cannot remember ever having been in a closed party meeting with Mr. Collins. I know that he has appeared before the committee but I still didn't know him then.

MR. TAVENNER. I may have misunderstood the pronunciation of the first name of Bessie. Did you say Alvah or Albert?

MISS LENNART. Alvah, A-l-v-a-h.

Shall I go on?

MR. TAVENNER. Yes.

MISS LENNART. I rejoined the group but I had begun writing at this time which meant working all day and writing at night, as many people do when they get started. So my attendance at that time continued to be erratic. However, in the fall of 1939 I sold my first story and got my first job as a screen writer at MGM at this time, because I was no longer working nights and so on, I started to go to meetings much more regularly, and I would say averaged about once a month.

I might say something about the dues system here, if you like. I remember having a good deal of trouble, always, during the entire period I was in the party with two things. One was my attendance and one was dues. In the years before I earned very much money I got myself quite badly in debt. It took me years to catch up. I still have this problem. And so I was always in a jam about paying dues. They have a percentage system. I don't know what the percentage was exactly, but mine, the last year I was in the party, would have brought me up to \$100 a month, which I just couldn't do, and said I wouldn't do.

MR. TAVENNER. What salary were you earning at that time, at the time that you endeavored—

MISS LENNART. I started in 1941 at \$150 a week at a 1-week guaranty, which didn't guarantee much security, but I have been there ever since. By the time I got out I imagine I was making about five or six hundred a week. I am not really sure of that, but I can easily find this information for you. But I couldn't pay \$100 a month because of other commitments that I had, and we settled. I was spoken to about it in terms of dues being a political duty, that this was the way you showed your devotion to the party, but I didn't have that much devotion because I wouldn't pay it. But at any rate we settled. In the early days I paid a flat \$25 a month and we settled on a flat \$50 and those were my top dues. I didn't pay much else besides that. I did make small contributions from time to time to the party press, the People's World and their regulars.

Mr. VELDE. Did you feel that you had no assistance from the Communist organizations, the one that you belonged to, in securing your job?

Miss LENNART. None at all. I wrote a story at night, which took me 6 months to write, not a very long story because I only had a couple of working hours at night. I wrote it with somebody, I took it to an agent, peddled it to several agents, and the first few didn't want it, and it didn't sell for about 6 months and then suddenly, when I least expected, it sold overnight and I was put to work as a screen writer. I had never written a screen play, but the years I had held script had taught me about the technical side of it so I was able to. But there was no connection between the two at all.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who was your agent at the time you sold the first one?

Miss LENNART. Harold Hecht, who is not a party member to the best of my knowledge. He was with the Nat Goldstone Agency. He left the agency, I think, to go into another agency, and I stayed on with Mr. Goldstone and then later with George Willner, who joined the agency. I was with the agency before Mr. Willner came on as an assistant.

Mr. TAVENNER. What Communist Party functionaries collected your dues, or chided you about the amount of your dues?

Miss LENNART. Elizabeth Leech. At the beginning Madelaine Ruthven and then later on Elizabeth Leech. The dues were collected usually at meetings. The office of treasurer was passed around. It was an unpopular office. Somebody would have it one time and somebody else the next. But since I missed so many, I usually paid mine to Elizabeth Leech.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were you ever a treasurer of the organization?

Miss LENNART. Not so far as I remember. I never held any office in the party so far as I remember.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you remember learning anything about the dues paid by other members of your group?

Miss LENNART. No. I never remembered this being discussed openly in the party except in terms of the percentage, and what the amount should be.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now, I would like to go back to this point and ask you a question which occurred to me earlier. When you spoke of the work that was being done by many of the Communist Party members of your group, with the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, was that league considered by the Communist Party members as a mass organization to be infiltrated and controlled or influenced by the Communist Party?

Miss LENNART. Well, when people were assigned to mass organization work they spoke of the Anti-Nazi League, so I assumed then, and do now, that they regarded it certainly as an organization to work through, and to influence, yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you ever do any work in recruiting others to membership?

Miss LENNART. No, I never recruited anybody into the Communist Party. I never sold a subscription to the People's World, although I contributed money to it. I was the recipient of two gift subscriptions myself. This was a popular method of recruiting, to send somebody

a three-month subscription to the People's World, somebody you thought should be in the party. I got two myself, anonymously, but I never sold any.

Do you have some questions?

MR. TAVENNER. How long did you remain a member of the Communist Party?

MISS LENNART. May I talk about this a little, because there wasn't a definite date, and I don't want to give a false impression.

MR. TAVENNER. You may cover it any way you like.

MISS LENNART. From 1941 until 1944, I considered myself a member of the party, and am not trying to minimize it. Their records, I think, will show that I was strictly a rank-and-file member. I didn't hold any office, I didn't work in any mass organization. I have never been a member of any mass organization, to my knowledge. I didn't recruit anyone else. I did contribute money, small amounts of money, to these things. I was not a member of the party fraction of writers in the Screen Writers' Guild. I certainly talked freely enough, at the studio and socially, about what was going on, but the only political activity I had was as a member of the Screen Writers' Guild, and that was since I was not in the fraction it was not directed activity.

When the party declared itself an association and gave up all talk of being a revolutionary party, I wasn't surprised because in relation to the people I knew, the idea that this was a revolutionary group, this seemed nonsense, considering the people I knew, and it still seemed to me so. However, even though I was considered a passive member from 1941 to 1944, I never asked myself what I was doing in it at all. And that seems fantastic to me now, but I think I can explain it.

I think I joined for good motives but my joining was unexamined, uncritical and emotional and something to regret. However, once I got in, I found a number of people who seemed to be there for the same reason I was, for nothing more vicious than that. You must remember that my knowledge of people was quite limited, I did not know the really active people in the party, and some of the information that has been divulged at other hearings of this committee has been startling to me, too. To me, and to many others, it was a place to gather to talk about what was going on around us, who was writing and what, what we could do about things that seemed unjust. But the atmosphere in the party is a strictly hot-house atmosphere. You all read the same things, you talk about the same things, you hear nothing but one point of view. You don't realize this when you are in. You don't realize you have blinders on. But you get so if somebody outside says something that doesn't fit in, you feel that they are being dupes, not you, you see. You feel that they are being influenced by a corrupt press. You don't challenge the press in the party. I may be doing injustice to people who examine things more carefully than I did, but this was certainly true of me and many people like me who were basically nonpolitical people.

As individuals, a great many people were well meaning and hard working without malice to anybody, but I know now that I had absolutely no right even from a Communist point of view to be where I was, because I had no understanding of what that might imply. I did begin to realize it in 1944, when I met the man I later married, who was very strongly anti-Communist. He didn't ask me to leave the



party, I told him about my membership very soon after I met him, because I knew it was going to be something important to him. He didn't ask me to leave the party or tell me to. I am very glad he didn't, I am glad I made the decision on my own. But he did ask me a lot of questions about why I was in, and there were questions I couldn't answer to my own satisfaction. He asked me how much Marxist literature I had read, and "very little" had to be the answer. He asked me how much I knew about the actual set-up of the party itself, who the actual leadership was, where the money came from and mostly for what purpose it was used, and I didn't know. I didn't have any secrets to hide, I just didn't know. But I was in an organization about which I didn't know anything.

He asked me things in terms of my attitude about this country, and did I have what the Communists call the long range point of view, which is that it doesn't matter what happens in a specific country sometimes, that is, at a specific time, that a longer range point of view about the whole world is what is important. I have never been able to have such a long range point of view. I care very specifically about what happens to the country I live in and the people I know. He asked if I believed in the necessity of violent overthrow of any government to change that government. I said no, but I thought on very strong ground here, because the party was an association at this time, and I said neither did the party.

My fiancé was very skeptical about it, he was a stevedore officer in the Army, and met people in different parts of the country, and including the water front, and he said from what I told him the party here in Hollywood sounded like a group of very nice people who had not the faintest idea about what the Communist Party was like.

Now, after all these years, and after reading what people who were more active than I experienced, I believe he was right, and that the group I was in certainly was a very special group organized largely for the purpose of raising money and names. And even at that time, back in 1944, when it was still an association, this atmosphere of a hot-house started to weave a spell for me. I found myself beginning to question who was the leadership, who chose them, how much was this a democratic organization.

Mr. WALTER. Who was the leadership at the time you started wondering who selected the leadership?

Miss LENNART. Do you mean of a specific section I was in?

Mr. WALTER. Yes.

Miss LENNART. John Howard Lawson and Madelaine Ruthven at the beginning, and then later on Madelaine Ruthven seemed to drop out of the picture.

Mr. WALTER. Who?

Miss LENNART. Madelaine Ruthven seemed to drop out of the picture and there was just Mr. Lawson. But what I just said, I was thinking not so much of the leadership of the Hollywood section, but I realized that I knew nothing about the party throughout the country, and that plainly what we were doing in Hollywood must have some connection with this, and of this I knew nothing.

Mr. WALTER. Why do you say plainly? What was there that occurred that led you to that conclusion?



MISS LENNART. What appeared eventually that led me to this conclusion, Congressman, was the question of the Duclos letter, in 1945, where suddenly it having been in association the day before which did not believe in the violent overthrow of the Government but believed in the very gradual socialization of the country, suddenly it was again the violent overthrow of the Government. And this was not by an American, but by a man in another country, who I did not believe could know what our problems were here and what the American people would want.

MR. WALTER. Then it was the Duclos letter that led you to a realization that you were a party to a conspiracy, an international conspiracy?

MISS LENNART. It certainly made me question whether I might not be exactly in that position and the minute I began to question, I left.

MR. VELDE. Did I misunderstand you? I thought you said you left the party in 1944.

MISS LENNART. No; I am sorry I was confusing on that point. I wanted to say in 1944, I started a kind of trickling away from the party, and all of my questions arose through this period, and I did not make, was not able to make, an overnight decision on it. My attendance became more and more erratic, my questions were more and more constant, and the Duclos letter, in 1945, and what happened in the party then, made the final decision for me. The people in my group and I myself questioned this letter. We were told that it had been discussed throughout the country and that the majority decision had been that the letter was correct, and that the party would be reorganized, but with my new skepticism I said, "Who said it has been discussed throughout the country."

MR. VELDE. There was quite a lot of dissension among the party members, I presume, over the Duclos letter?

MISS LENNART. Yes; there was a great deal, and I believe a great many people left at this time, for this reason. I felt that this was an order that had been introduced for the purpose of discussion. It seemed to me to be an order, and the discussion didn't make any difference.

MR. WALTER. Who introduced the letter as a subject for discussion?

MISS LENNART. It was introduced in the group. I don't remember the specific person, one of the people I have mentioned. But we were told it was introduced simultaneously in all groups throughout the country.

MR. WALTER. Who told you that?

MISS LENNART. Again, somebody in the group. I seem to remember vaguely that Alvah Bessie had introduced the subject for discussion, but I couldn't swear to that, Congressman, because I don't remember specifically.

MR. WALTER. Wasn't it at that time suggested to you that the time had arrived for you to choose sides, you were either for America or for this international conspiracy?

MISS LENNART. I could just say that I chose sides, I left.

MR. WALTER. Wasn't it indicated to you at that time that it arrived, that all of the Communists had to stand up and be counted?

MISS LENNART. I think that is so, yes. At any rate, the meeting about the Duclos letter was the last meeting that I attended. I got

married in August 1946, but before I got married I had a long talk with my fiancée about it, and agreed, because I wanted to, that I would never again consider myself a Communist, go to a Communist meeting, or engage in any activities which I knew were Communist led, and I never have.

Mr. WOOD. When did your contributions to the party cease?

Miss LENNART. My contributions stopped when I stopped going to meetings, which was in 1945.

Mr. VELDE. Did you do anything else of a positive nature to disassociate yourself from the party, like writing a letter?

Miss LENNART. No; I was called and asked if I was coming to any more meetings, and this is the name—I had forgotten this call, incidentally, I was called by a man named—I have never met him or seen him. It was Stach or Stapp, I don't know which his name is.

Mr. TAVENNER. John Stapp?

Miss LENNART. That, I am almost sure, is the name. He telephoned to ask if I would plan to come to any more meetings, and I said "No."

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you learn that he was the functionary of the Communist Party in Los Angeles?

Miss LENNART. I had heard his name as being—no, I can't say in Los Angeles, but I heard he was a functionary of the Communist Party.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did he ask you for any reasons why you had stopped attending the party meetings?

Miss LENNART. No; but I think these reasons were well known in my group. It is not a policy in the party, especially for a woman, if it is a woman who has been a Communist, if she makes a marriage, mixed marriage to somebody who is not a Communist, it is generally accepted—it isn't a rule or anything—but I suppose for security reasons it is just expected that you probably will want to leave, and I think this is why I got no pressure except for this question. I think that my increasing resistance at meetings and the decreasing number of meetings I went to must have made this quite clear before I actually stopped completely.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was your activity in the Screen Writers' Guild, after you withdrew from the Communist Party in 1945?

Miss LENNART. My period of activity in the guild, of any real activity in the guild, was after—I must say 1946, is the date I would give as the formal end. I had no activity in 1945, but 1946 was when I really considered that the break was final. I was more active in the guild after I was out of the Communist Party than I had ever been before. I think this was largely because I began to be a little more established in my profession. I was for a year alternate on the board of directors of the guild. I was for a year on the editorial board of the guild magazine Screen Writer, and I was elected not by the guild but the writers of my studio as shop steward there for a year. That is normally pretty much a bookkeeping job. You keep track of assignments, credits, and so on. But during the year I was shop steward there was a very confusing jurisdictional strike. At the guild request I called a meeting of writers on the lot to decide whether we would go through the picket lines or not. We did go through the picket lines which was the guild decision, I believe, at the time.

But those all were activities for the guild and they had no connection with the Communist Party because I no longer had any connection with the Communist Party.

MR. TAVENNER. We have information that you were a signer of the Albert Maltz nominating petition in the Screen Writers' Guild in 1949.

MISS LENNART. Yes. I was going to go on to say that I had agreed that I would never again engage in any activity that I believed was Communist led after 1946. The last and only, the only, activity that could be called political activity that I was involved in since that time was in connection with the Hollywood 10. I did more than sign a petition for Albert Maltz. I signed an amicus curiae brief. I don't remember who asked me to sign the brief, which I did sign, but I know it wasn't a Communist for a very good reason. I was extremely nervous by that time about my political past, and it was obvious that a great deal of trouble was coming in the future, and I was trying very hard to be involved in nothing. I would have been afraid of being involved in anything that was Communist led. It was explained to me that the brief was on a constitutional question, that it did not mean that you felt the 10 were right or wrong, but that you were asking the Supreme Court to review the case. I had a reason for this, and I hope, and I still have it. I hoped that a review of the case would be that the Supreme Court would declare the Communist Party an illegal party. It seemed to me the only chance for people, but I was very concerned about my family and myself.

I felt that if the party were made illegal as of a certain date, people could freely stand up and say "We joined this when it was legal, now it isn't. We want no part of it." And then get out. Those that wanted to stay in then knew consciously and deliberately that they were involved in an illegal organization and they could take whatever was coming to them. I did not know all of the 10, but I understood, rightly or wrongly, that some of them had been in but were out, and that some had not been in. And I identified myself with what was happening to them. I felt that it would very likely happen to me. To the best of my belief, on this problem of the 10, I was involved in activity, but this was the last conscious political activity I have ever taken. In terms of Albert Maltz, this, Mr. Tavenner, was not a petition to elect Mr. Maltz to the board of directors of the guild, but simply to allow him to be a candidate. I know who asked me to sign this. It was somebody where the petition circled the writers' table at lunch time. It was given to me by a totally non-Communist, or nonprogressive even, and there were a lot of signatures on it, and I felt if a number of people wanted this guy to run as a candidate, there was no reason for him not to run. This did not mean that the guild did elect him. I did not vote in that election or any election since then because I have always felt until my own situation was cleared up I make suspect any side I am on.

MR. WALTER. Let us see if we have this straight. You signed a nominating petition after Maltz had been convicted?

MISS LENNART. Yes, I did, this was in 1949.

MR. WALTER. Do you reconcile that with the statement you made with respect to your signing of the petition amicus curiae?

MISS LENNART. The petition for Maltz was not given to me by a Communist or even a Communist sympathizer.



Mr. WALTER. But you knew that he was a Communist, did you not?

Miss LENNART. I knew that he had been in contempt of Congress, and I assumed—No, I am sorry. What am I saying. I knew definitely well Maltz was; yes. But I felt that he had been in prison, he had done this, and I didn't—this was for an office in the Screen Writers' Guild which would not put him on the board but give people the chance to elect him if they wanted to. On the other hand, I would like to say generally, more than anything else in the past weeks when I have been looking back over my own past and over my own records, the thing I reproach myself with more bitterly than anything else is the irresponsibility that I and perhaps many other people have shown in the things we lent our names to, the things we gave money to, and the things we talked for, without ever sitting down to figure out what exactly we were doing and what connection it had with the other things.

Mr. WALTER. Of course, that is a very gross understatement. But I still haven't my mind straight on why, if you wanted an opportunity to escape, as it were, through a decision of the Supreme Court, you were willing subsequently to place a man in a position, knowing that he was a member of the Communist Party.

Miss LENNART. Well, Congressman, there seems to me always to be a contradiction in this. If the guild allows a man to be a member, knowing he is a Communist, and accepts his dues, it seemed to me at that time——

Mr. WALTER. But you were a member of the guild, were you not?

Miss LENNART. Yes.

Mr. WALTER. Did you want a man of that sort to speak for you?

Miss LENNART. I didn't vote for him for this reason. But I thought other people wanted him to run, and I——

Mr. WOOD. You mean you signed a petition permitting him to be a candidate?

Miss LENNART. To be a candidate.

Mr. WOOD. And then voted against him in the election?

Miss LENNART. I didn't vote at all in the election. But I would not have voted for him.

Mr. WOOD. It should also be borne in mind, that a conviction of the Hollywood 10 was not for being members of the Communist Party. You can't prosecute for that. But for refusing to do exactly what you are doing, that is, answer questions pertinent to the inquiry of the committee.

Miss LENNART. Yes, sir, I understand that. Well, that brings us up to Mr. Wheeler's visit in 1951, and I had said I would like to talk on why I told him a year ago that I did not think, if I were subpoenaed, I would give names and why I obviously have changed my opinion on this today. I would like to say why I didn't want to give them a year ago. In the years since I have been married, my life has changed a great deal. I no longer saw the people I had once known. I have lost track of most of them. The whole subject of the party was one I kept pretty closed. I knew that my convictions had changed. I felt that my conscience was clear, that I was doing nothing that could hurt this country in any way. I thought it was more than likely that many of the people I had known once had changed as much as I had, and I couldn't bring myself to damage anyone in a way that I felt I was



going to be damaged because I thought that when I testified, that career I had worked hard at for a long time would be over. I was also in the third month of a pregnancy. I was emotionally not too stable, and I just couldn't get myself to do it.

Mr. Wood. What made you believe that? Do you know of any person who had been called to testify before an authorized body of people or a committee of Congress with reference to party affiliation in the Communist movement, who has done so, freely, honestly, who has been penalized on account of it, with reference to their position?

Miss LENNART. No, I do not, since that time. But Congressman, may I say that this was before the hearings. There was an awful lot of talk in town. Nobody knew what was going to happen, you know, and that feeling would be that if one spoke honestly and openly you would not be an outcast. But my meeting with Mr. Wheeler was before I knew this and I was in quite a turmoil about it. I must confess that after my meeting with Mr. Wheeler I relaxed a little about the whole matter. I live in comparative isolation from the political zone in Hollywood and from the social zone. We live quite a bit out of town, and between working and bringing up my children and running my house, I have another child besides the new one, I don't get around much. I have lost touch with what was going on. I felt that the past was over for me. I had told Mr. Wheeler I had been in the party, I was out of the party, he seemed to believe me, and so on. In the last months, however, since the birth of my second child, who was ill after she was born and that kept me busy for a while, I started working at the studio again. In this past year I worked at the studio very little and people didn't talk to me much about what was going on, probably because I hadn't been mentioned. I heard rumors that I heard for the first time that were very shocking to me and horrifying to me. This one I didn't hear directly, but I was told that it was commonly supposed that the reason I was still able to work even though I had been mentioned at the last hearings last year was that I had made a deal with someone, and this was pretty revolting for me and for this committee, too, I felt. The other rumor, this opposing rumor was that I was the last active, powerful Communist in Hollywood, that for some reason I was such a powerful Communist I couldn't be touched. This rumor was appalling to me, too.

Mr. Wood. I think it appropriate at this point to let the record be perfectly clear that there has never been any deal entered into by this committee or any member of the committee, so far as I know, or, any member of its staff.

Miss LENNART. I don't consider the committee's consideration for a woman who is busy having a child a deal. I call it something I am grateful for. But it is pretty horrifying to hear that I alone was working because I possibly had paid out a great deal of money, and you can imagine this was a very upsetting thing to hear.

Besides that, I find now something else I didn't know: that I am a source of embarrassment to many of our friends who are not and have never been Communists, and it has become a very brave thing to be a friend of mine now, with the rumors going on. Besides that, I have three children. I have two of my own and I have a stepson I have raised who is going to college this fall. I don't think it is fair that they grow up under a cloud which is none of their doing and which

there is no reason for today, since I have no brief or affiliation in this organization. I am working in a field which I love, and which has been very good to me. I realize now that there is a great deal of public opinion on this point, and that public opinion is important to the industry for which I work; rightly so. If that public opinion wants to know where I stand and what I do aside from the pictures I write, I think they have a right to know and I have to answer them. This is what changed my mind about coming here today.

I can try to sum up for myself very quickly. I joined the Communist Party without the critical examination of it which I should have made.

(Representative Harold H. Velde left the room at this point.)

MISS LENNART. I believe I was too young and too politically ignorant. I stayed in it as long as I felt certain I was doing nothing wrong. When I was no longer certain, when I realized I didn't understand the nature of communism or the party, sufficiently to be sure of the relationship of what I was doing to a possibly larger plan, I got out. I paid a great deal in worry and anxiety and unhappiness from the time I was in, and I am glad I got out when I did. I wish it was sooner. I am very grateful to set the record straight.

MR. WOOD. It is quite understandable to me, in the period of which you speak, that a great many people in America were confused, when people became a little skeptical. I understand why people might cast around for some avenue making it a better place to live in.

MISS LENNART. Congressman, on this point, I believe that when I was looking around, passing around, had some other doors opened to me I would have taken them. But I think it was a very typical approach of the Communist Party to be, for its people to be, very friendly and very kind, especially to young people. I think this is largely why I took this particular way.

MR. WOOD. But, of course, I have never become convinced that communism furnished even a remote avenue for the betterment of this country. On the contrary, it would be a very sad day to have that come down here. I have come to the realization that the people who are in important fields as you are, entertainment, should come forward and give us the benefit of your experience with it. It is of gratification to me and to all of the American people. I have previously expressed myself in hearings both public and private that people who have that much courage, that much regard for their community and family, who will come forward and cooperate with this committee, that no postscripts, economically, will be levied against them. I personally am very grateful to you for coming here.

Have you any further questions, Mr. Tavenner?

MR. TAVENNER. There is just one point, Mr. Chairman, that I though I would like to discuss. The witness said that she felt that so long as she was doing no harm in the Communist Party, or words to that effect, that there was nothing so objectionable to her being a member. That was the sense that I understood her to say. But actually, when you look back upon your experience, don't you agree that a person cannot be a member of the Communist Party without doing harm, because by being a member you are lending your moral assistance and your aid to those of the Communist Party who are out, unquestionably, to do harm.

Miss LENNART. I most certainly believe that now. Most certainly. I believe with you. You can't be as irresponsible as to think that what you specifically are doing is all there is to it. You have to see how this ties in with what other people are doing, and you have to consider yourself a party to it, and that is why I did not want to be in it.

Mr. TAVENNER. Have you attended any Communist Party meeting since this time you state you withdrew from the party in the latter part of 1945 or 1946?

Miss LENNART. August 1946 would be a definite day. No, I have not, Mr. Tavenner.

Mr. TAVENNER. Your withdrawal has been full and complete?

Miss LENNART. Full and complete, and permanent and final.

Mr. TAVENNER. I have no further questions.

Mr. WOOD. With no further questions, the committee wishes to thank you for your presence here, and you will be excused.

Counsel, will you call the next witness?

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Stanley Roberts.

Mr. WOOD. Do you solemnly swear that the evidence which you shall give the subcommittee shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. ROBERTS. I do.

### TESTIMONY OF STANLEY ROBERTS

Mr. WOOD. Are you represented by counsel?

Mr. ROBERTS. I have had the advice of counsel, but I don't think I will need him.

Mr. TAVENNER. What is your name, please, sir?

Mr. ROBERTS. Stanley Roberts.

Mr. TAVENNER. When and where were you born?

Mr. ROBERTS. New York City, 1916.

Mr. TAVENNER. Are you here pursuant to a subpoena?

Mr. ROBERTS. No; I am not. There was no subpoena issued of any kind. I read the chairman's offer in terms of this committee's asking people who had been Communists to come up and clear the facts. That is why I am here today. I would like to clear them up once and for all.

Mr. TAVENNER. You have been a member of the Communist Party in the past?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes; I have.

Mr. TAVENNER. Before we discuss that, what is your profession?

Mr. ROBERTS. I am a motion-picture writer, Mr. Tavenner.

Mr. TAVENNER. How long have you been a motion-picture writer?

Mr. ROBERTS. I have been a motion-picture writer since 1936, for a little over 13 years.

Mr. TAVENNER. What studios have you worked for?

Mr. ROBERTS. I worked for most of the major studios in the business. I worked for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. I worked for Columbia, Universal, and I have to admit I even worked for Monogram. I worked for possibly all of the major studios with the exception of Fox and Paramount.

Mr. TAVENNER. When did you become a member of the Communist Party?



Mr. ROBERTS. It is very easily fixed in my mind because it is shortly after Roosevelt's death. I would say somewhere toward the end of April or the beginning of May in 1945.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you tell the committee, please, the circumstances under which you became a member and what led up to it?

Mr. ROBERTS. I think the only thing to do is to begin at the beginning. I have listened to Miss Lennart testify and I also listened to Odets this morning. The feeling I have is that it is very difficult for us to understand, but communism in Hollywood, as I have seen it and I am sure as Miss Lennart has seen it, is on a purely local level. It doesn't seem to go anywhere. It is true they have used names; they have used money; they have used everything. But, to the average screen writer or an actor in Hollywood, it all seemed to be part of Hollywood and no more. I arrived in Hollywood, as I said, in 1936. What Miss Lennart seemed to get at was that the only people who seemed to be friendly were the Communists. They had a reason, a strong reason. They were completely accessible. It wasn't the idea of a better life for the country or even the State or the city. It was the idea of finding somebody who could be pleasant and find a place to go. The Communists were out there in full force, with names, with people of real prestige and position, when they shook your hand, and that was the beginning of it. As early as 1938, I used to go to a book store called the Book of the Day Shop.

Mr. TAVENNER. Don't lower your voice, just slow up.

Mr. ROBERTS. I went to a book store called the Book of the Day Shop. There I met Arnaud D'Usseau and his wife Susan D'Usseau. We became friendly, and as early as 1938 they asked me to join the party. I was rather surprised that this was the price of hospitality. I refused the invitation. This thing was repeated over and over again during a 9-year period from about 1938 to about 1945.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you mean by the same individuals or by different people?

Mr. ROBERTS. No, not by the same individuals. In 1941 or 1942, I had adjoining offices to Lees and Rinaldo, Robert Lees and Frederick Rinaldo. I was invited to Mr. Lees' home for dinner. It seemed to be a fine dinner, and the minute dinner was over I was asked if I would care to join the party again. This was a constantly repeated thing. As late as 1943 or 1944 I was invited with a group of die-hards to an open meeting at the home of Ben Barzman, who was a screen writer, to explain what my objections to the Communist Party were. John Howard Lawson was there, and answering most of the questions. I complained about the American Peace Mobilization becoming the American People's Mobilization overnight. I complained about their explanations on Finland. I found great fault with the Russo-Hitler pact, and in all three cases they immediately admitted "We were wrong, but everybody makes mistakes." The answer still wasn't good enough, and it wasn't until 1945, after the death of Franklin Roosevelt, that a very, very close friend of mine said that this was the death of liberalism in America, and that he had been questioned or had been asked to join the party repeatedly and that he would join if I would. His name was Bernard C. Schoenfeld.

Mr. TAVENNER. Spell it, please.



Mr. ROBERTS. S-c-h-o-e-n-f-e-l-d. He had worked in Government radio for about 5 or 6 years, and somehow in my eyes this made him a political pundit. I don't know why. I had great objections to this party. I said I would not be interested for a moment in joining a party which was dedicated to the overthrow of the Government. I was told that I was very foolish, that the party was definitely determined to work for gradual change, nothing else. In fact it was not even a party, it was an association. And that it would work within the framework of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. Delegates were sent to me about 2 or 3 weeks afterwards, and I am sorry but the only name that I can remember, I think there were two or three men, was Edward Huebsch.

Mr. TAVENNER. Spell the last name.

Mr. ROBERTS. H-u-e-b-s-c-h. And they explained that I was living in the dark ages, that the party was merely interested in the things that I was interested in, better conditions in the Screen Writers' Guild, better labor conditions in Hollywood, higher wages, and so forth, and in furthering Roosevelt's policies. The answer is I was sold a bill of goods and I accepted it. I was not drugged and I was not looking for girls or the other routines that have gone on here. I accepted in good faith what I was told. The upshot of it was that I was taken to a meeting. I am not quite sure of the house, but I feel it was probably the house of Paul Trivers, who was a writer, and the meeting was completely open. There was no security; there was no secrecy of any kind. This would be sometime in May. Due to illness, unfortunately, I attended no more than two or three meetings. I was quite vague in terms of what was going on, because I was becoming terribly ill, and it all seemed to me a grand waste of time. In any case, this is the first phase of whatever political activity there is.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you return at that time to New York, or to the East?

Mr. ROBERTS. I returned to New York City, Mr. Tavenner, sometime, I believe, in July or August, and I remained in New York.

Mr. TAVENNER. Of what year?

Mr. ROBERTS. 1945.

(Representative Harold H. Velde returned to the room at this point.)

Mr. ROBERTS. I remained in New York until October. Upon my return in October, on doctor's orders, I took a leave of absence. Actually, I wanted to quit, and they suggested a year's leave of absence would be much better, and that there was no rush as long as I was not well.

Mr. TAVENNER. Let us go back a moment to the first group to which you were assigned when you joined the party, which was prior also to your return to New York. You said you met at the home of Paul Trivers?

Mr. ROBERTS. That is right.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who were the other members of that group?

Mr. ROBERTS. This one group I am not sure of because it was so big. I knew very few people. I know that Mr. Lawson was there; I know that Mr. and Mrs. Trivers were there, and I also think that the Butlers were there. As for the rest of them, I can't be sure of the one really big meeting.

Mr. TAVENNER. When you speak of "the Butlers," to whom do you refer?

Mr. ROBERTS. Hugo Butler, who was a writer, and his wife Jean Butler, who was also a writer.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was Mr. Schoenfeld there?

Mr. ROBERTS. Oh yes, indeed. Mr. Schoenfeld was there; yes. He escorted me proudly into the group.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was that?

Mr. ROBERTS. He escorted me proudly into the group. I was the catch.

Mr. TAVENNER. How long did you remain out of active attendance in the Communist Party when you left in July or August of 1946?

Mr. ROBERTS. I can't place—1945, Mr. Tavenner—in terms of dates, but it is very simple to pick up. Somewhere in the middle of 1946, when the CSU strike became very hot, the party sent somebody to see me, and I again think it was Ed Huebsch, and the basis of my coming back, and they wanted me to come back because the CSU fight they felt required everybody. They sold a bill of goods on the basis of this being the fight for the only honest unions in all of Hollywood.

Mr. TAVENNER. You referred to CSU?

Mr. ROBERTS. This is the Conference of Studio Unions which I believe was run by Mr. Herbert Sorrell, and it was a series of minor independent guilds. There was no party speech at all; it was merely if Hollywood was to survive we had to have honest unions and all that the party cared about was protecting these unions. So it is at this point that I returned, I would say, somewhere around the middle of 1946, and I was assigned to a group in the Bronson area. Everybody at whose houses we met seemed to live somewhere around Bronson, either up the hill or down the hill, but within an area of a couple of miles. It was actually out of the neighborhood in which I lived.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who were those who were members of that group?

Mr. ROBERTS. In the group that I belonged to were Herbert Biberman, who was a director; Michael Uris, who was a writer and a story editor; Mrs. Michael Uris, who was Dorothy Tree, the actress; Mr. and Mrs. Edward Biberman. Mrs. Biberman was Sonja Dahl—I believe that is the name she used professionally—and Edward Biberman was a painter. Hugo and Mrs. Butler, John Berry, the director; Mr. Schoenfeld; a writer named Irvin Lieberman; Carl Foreman, who was a screen writer and who dropped out a few weeks after I came back due to the pressure of work; and a man named Alex Greenberg. Now, I don't know what he did, or what his profession was, but he was the organizational secretary. He seemed to come in with the agendas and everything connected with procedures.

The group then, I understand, was very much smaller than they were during the days of the CPA, and this would be probably the whole group.

Mr. TAVENNER. You mentioned Edward Huebsch as a member of the first group. Was he a member of the second group also?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes; and I believe Mrs. Huebsch was too.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was her first name?

Mr. ROBERTS. I don't know.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you know whether Paul Trivers, who was a member of the first group, was likewise a member of the second group?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes; definitely was, and so was Mrs. Trivers.

Mr. TAVENNER. How long were you a member of this second group?

Mr. ROBERTS. I was a member of this second group for probably 2 or 3 months, and I complained very bitterly that if they wanted me back in terms of fighting or working in the guild, I certainly was accomplishing nothing with this group. The meetings were a pure farce. The prime purpose of these meetings was to discuss the role of the cultural worker. This is a strange phrase which is used in Communist Party circles to define what you do with Hollywood people. They must remain anonymous. They will not do door-to-door work. They have no real function at all except to give money and to use their names as far as prestige is concerned to front causes, not as far as the Communist Party as such; and, therefore, there would be endless wrangling as to how these people could actually function.

There was another meeting, strangely enough, in terms of how to give the women more to do. I was the only bachelor in the group, and I suggested asking the women. I was completely ruled down. After bitter complaint I was transferred to a writers' fraction to deal primarily with guild problems, which is why I was supposedly asked to come back. This was a group consisting for the most part of writers, a few actors, and a few directors, who dealt with screen writers' guild problems, and the labor problems of Hollywood.

The big reason that they insisted that the party be the important wheel here was that no one could serve as a liaison between the three guilds except the Communist Party. Otherwise, the actors would never speak to the director; the directors would never speak to the writers. These meetings, all of them, were held about every 2 weeks at the home of Mr. Abraham Polonsky. Mr. Polonsky was a writer and a director and I actually feel the successor to Mr. Lawson in the Hollywood picture.

If Mr. Lawson appeared, it was always as an elder statesman, not as an active force. If you like, I can discuss several of the issues that were discussed within this writers' group.

Mr. TAVENNER. We would be very glad for you to do so.

Mr. ROBERTS. First of all, the Screen Writers Magazine, which was originally designed to do a public-relations job for all writers, was to make newspaper critics aware of the function of the writing of motion pictures. The Communist Party took another track entirely. They saw it as a house organ, as a means of exploiting their particular ideas.

Now, a great deal of the magazine was very good and was merely about honest screen writing. But the Communists did not want to lose control of this, and fought very hard to prevent the magazine from going out of existence, and they lost it; and I think rightly so.

The second thing involved, or the most important thing, was the question of the CSU. There were constant reports on the Conference of Studio Unions. They seemed to get nowhere, absolutely nowhere, with trying to do what they wanted to do, and at this point various actors and directors came into the picture, since they, too, were dealing with Sorrell.

Now, if you would like the names of the writers in this group, we had Lester Cole, Dalton Trumbo, John Howard Lawson, Gordon Kahn, Edward Huebsch, Hugo Butler, and Richard Collins.



Representing the actors who came to discuss this were Karen Morley and Lloyd Gough; and for the directors, John Berry and Bernard Vorhaus.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was the last-named person known to you to be a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. ROBERTS. Was Bernard Vorhaus? Yes. No one was at these meetings who was not a member of the Communist Party. That is something I am quite sure of. In addition to this, everybody in this group was a professional of some sort; was connected with the motion-picture business. The only non-motion-picture businessman who attended was a man named John Stapp. I was very curious about what he did, and I was told that he was in charge of party labor organizing. That is all I know about Mr. Stapp. But he is the only nonprofessional ever to attend these meetings.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you subsequently learn that he was a functionary of the Communist Party?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes; I learned that a good deal later. I was extremely curious as to whether he was. The only thing is that he was the only new face I saw in terms of people I did not know in the industry.

I would like to say, too, that, even with this group here, the results were completely ineffectual; they accomplished nothing. The Screen Writers went out of existence, as it should have. The CSU, nothing happened as far as protecting Mr. Sorrell was concerned. The CSU was finished, and the Communists certainly helped drive nails into that.

Another project was the Hollywood Writers' Mobilization.

Mr. TAVENNER. Before you come to that, what activity did John Stapp engage in in connection with these meetings?

Mr. ROBERTS. He only arrived once; he was only at one meeting, and it is as if it were a pep talk to the group, to stress the importance of why the Sorrell unions must survive. That was all. I mean, there was no procedure suggested, and I was never in on any negotiations, nor did I meet Mr. Sorrell or anything in that regard.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now, if you will, proceed to the Hollywood Writers' Mobilization.

Mr. ROBERTS. They also seemed very interested in protecting the Hollywood Writers' Mobilization. My knowledge of this organization was that it was originally founded by the Screen Writers' Guild, in conjunction with a great many other guilds, to further the war effort against Germany. It was used to channel material to actors for war-bond drives, to do everything possible to promote the war. As the war began to finish, the Communists saw a wonderful chance to use it, and it is at this point that they stepped in and used the organization for a totally different function.

They were determined to keep the Hollywood Quarterly alive, and to use this as a front for their activities. Again, the Hollywood Writers' Mobilization was defeated. This is the only example I know of where they did not originate the organization, where they picked up an existing organization and used it for their own purposes.

Mr. TAVENNER. From your knowledge of the operation of the Hollywood Writers' Mobilization, do you consider that the Communists gained control of it?



Mr. ROBERTS. I think they did, definitely. I mean I don't think there is a question of my thinking so; I am sure they did.

At the period that the panels were conducted about wartime activities, they did not have control of the organization, it was a guild enterprise.

Mr. TAVENNER. That was testified to at some length by Richard Collins, I believe, in his testimony before this committee, or possibly Mr. Dmytryk.

Mr. ROBERTS. I don't know that, sir.

Now, in relation to the results, as to the work of this writers' group, there were constant speeches made on the floor of the guild in terms of the CSU, of the Conference of Studio Unions' fight. The guild membership began to become more and more against the left faction which were determined to support Mr. Sorrell, and the guild under the leadership of Emmett Lavery, began to beat the Communists to a standstill. It is at this point that I began to object very, very strongly to the tactics that were used.

Mr. TAVENNER. You mean the tactics used by the Communist Party?

Mr. ROBERTS. By the Communist Party, very definitely. And beginning in 1947, the all guild committee was formed to defeat these Communist tactics, and I should say I think rightly so.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did the Communist Party endeavor to use you in any particular way in connection with that fight in the Screen Writers' Guild?

Mr. ROBERTS. Very definitely attempted to use me. I was a very good friend of Sheridan Gibney's, who had been a president of the guild for some two terms, and who was an anti-Communist. The party sent me, and I believe Mr. Huebsch to speak to Mr. Gibney and ask him to condemn the all-guild slate. Mr. Gibney said that he was running as an independent, and refused to condemn the right of any group in the guild to form whatever slate they pleased, and particularly an anti-Communist slate. The result of this was that the party became furious with Mr. Gibney and a series of slanders and lies began to be circulated by members of the party.

Mr. TAVENNER. Why were you selected to go to Gibney?

Mr. ROBERTS. Because of my personal friendship with Gibney over a period of about 8 years.

Mr. TAVENNER. So the Communist Party, of which you were then a member—

Mr. ROBERTS. That is right.

Mr. TAVENNER. Endeavored to get you to exploit your personal friendship with Mr. Gibney to influence his action in this matter?

Mr. ROBERTS. That is right. Then Mr. Gibney was elected president of the guild, and it was at this point that the Hugo Butler resolution came into being, in which the guild was asked to support the Hollywood Ten, I believe, against the committee; that the guild was asked to throw its legal resources behind the 10 to fight the case for them. This was voted down by the Screen Writers' Guild.

Mr. TAVENNER. Where did the movement have its origin?

Mr. ROBERTS. In the Communist Party. There is no question about that. What happened here was that I attempted to speak very loudly against the Butler resolution, because of its effect on the guild. I began to see the guild take a tremendous beating and nobody in the party would stop.

I fought against the Butler resolution and then, in a very stupid piece of party discipline, voted for it on the floor of the guild. It was resoundingly defeated. This was not going to stop the party from pursuing the fight further. I had an argument with Mr. Polonsky about this point and said that the continuation of these tactics could only wreck the Screen Writers' Guild. It was then that Polonsky came out openly with the statement that if we wrecked the Screen Writers' Guild we will build another one. "If need be, we will wreck 20 to achieve what we want." It was then I shook his hand and said: "This is not for me."

Mr. TAVENNER. In other words, it adopted a policy of rule or ruin?

Mr. ROBERTS. That is right, and rule on their own terms, and so on.

I joined the party because I felt this was the only way to function inside the guild itself, only to discover that all they were interested in doing was to destroy the guild if it didn't happen to suit their purposes.

That would conclude my status with the party as of the very beginning of 1948. I served on the Screen Writers' Guild bargaining committee during this year, and about 4 or 5 months later Hugo Butler came to me and said, where was I and why hadn't I attended meetings, and so forth, and I explained that I was through, flatly, and this much he should have known before.

There is only one other piece of applicable activity in all this period which I think is an interesting sideline. In 1948, through some friends of mine who were not Communists in any way, I was again asked to work with an organization called Field Theater. They were going to put on a group of shows for Henry Wallace. I helped write material for these shows, and it wasn't long before I saw the same faces turn up all over again. Karen Morley came there to run things, and I became very angry with that. The Wallace campaign was being run by Communists. I threatened to pull out, and what is more, agreed to finance the show myself. The next thing I knew is that ASP turned out to be the parent organization of Field Theater, showed up and became highly supplicating and said we would run this whole thing without any interference. Mr. Wallace played several appearances in Los Angeles, made the mistake of speaking off the record, and I voted for Truman.

The Field Theater is only one of any number of front organizations that are like Topsy. They spring up every 2 minutes under new names, and you will suddenly see new faces.

This is the entire political picture, and from that point on there has been nothing.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you have any contact with the officials of the ASPC?

Mr. ROBERTS. The only official of ASPC I ever met was a woman named Mrs. George Pepper, who I believe at this time was Mrs. George Pepper. I don't believe I know who the officials were.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was there any particular importance of that discussion to the matter under investigation here?

Mr. ROBERTS. In terms of the investigation here? No, nothing related to the investigation at all. It was merely—

Mr. TAVENNER. I mean anything relating to the subject of communism or having any bearing on it, which we would be interested in in the course of this investigation?

Mr. ROBERTS. No. ASP has been careful to avoid any such thing. The whole purpose of a front organization is not to mention words like communism. It would scare people away. They would not deal with it. I know what you have there, Mr. Tavenner, if I may bring it up I would like very much to do it. I feel ASP represents a tremendous danger at this particular point. A few months ago they circulated a booklet called, *The Truth About Korea*, which couldn't have been written better by the Russians. It was sent practically to the entire mailing list of the guild, and it begins with the simple idea that we attack north Korea. You can take it from there. I think that the committee should study this pamphlet and I don't think there is any question to say that the Arts, Sciences and Professions Council today is a mouthpiece of the Communist party.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you examine the booklet before you and state whether it is the same which you received and others, in Los Angeles, which you and others in Los Angeles received?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. I desire to offer it in evidence and ask that it be marked Roberts' exhibit No. 1.

Mr. WOOD. Let it be admitted.

(The pamphlet referred to was marked "Roberts' Exhibit No. 1" and made a part of the record.)

Mr. VELDE. Mr. Roberts, do you know who sent you that?

Mr. ROBERTS. No; they were sent in brown envelopes. There is no author on this, no author credit. Nobody seemed to want it, and I don't blame him. All it had on it was ASP, and Cross Roads of the World.

Mr. VELDE. What did you say the address was?

Mr. ROBERTS. Cross Roads of the World, which is on Sunset Boulevard.

Mr. WOOD. That is where the ASP has their headquarters?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, that is where they have their offices. There was no card of any kind. It was sent to a blanket list. Probably 1,500 or more sent out.

Mr. VELDE. And there was no return address on it?

Mr. ROBERTS. There was a return address, Mr. Velde. The address was the ASP offices in Hollywood. That was on the envelope. It is also on the back, if I believe correctly, it is on the back cover too, because this is published by the Arts, Sciences, and Professions Council.

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes, there appears on the back sheet, Southern California Chapter of the National Council, Arts, Sciences, and Professions, 1586 Cross Roads of the World, Hollywood 28, Calif.

Mr. WALTER. I think you should bring the officials of that organization in and find out some things about the pamphlet.

Mr. TAVENNER. Due to the lateness of the hour, we will not attempt to discuss the pamphlet now, other than to permit you to make any additional references to it that you desire to make.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Tavenner, I am no more an authority on this pamphlet than anybody who read it in Hollywood. I have no connection with it except that I received it in the mail. The sense of shock and revulsion that this could be sent out in these times is startling, and it is very wide spread. Friends of mine were absolutely shocked by it.



Mr. Odets this morning discussed the question of front organizations, and how it is very difficult picking the tune. I feel that it is up to this committee to expose the core of these organizations, and I think that the minute this happens, the people who are duped or fooled will be able to pick out, as Mr. Odets puts it, the right tune.

I know that it is not the idea of this committee to destroy liberal thought. On the other hand, it is not the purpose to further communism, which most of these organizations do.

Mr. WALTER. In other words, it is not only important to hear the right tune, but it is of importance to know who is playing.

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes. You have to know the man who is the band leader; I would say.

In finishing this, I am not going to slash my wrists, as seems to be the behavior in many cases. I made a great mistake. My knowledge of communism was purely on a local level. I should have asked questions, but I didn't. The first time I understood the Duclos letter was when Sidney Buchman testified on television, and then I began to understand what it meant. My disillusionment was on the basis of local level entirely, that these people will stoop to anything to justify any ends, and I can only guess from here what the international level might be.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then I understand that your severance with the Communist Party has been full and complete?

Mr. ROBERTS. Absolutely complete. I am very proud of the fact that after 1948 I could not be fooled. I did not sign the amicus curiae petition! I wouldn't go near it. I did not sign the Albert Maltz nominating petition. The minute that these things began to circulate, the question was, The idea may be fine, but who is doing it? Usually when you see a petition you can guess pretty well where it comes from.

Mr. TAVENNER. Have you advised any Government agency of your activities in the Communist Party other than the Committee on Un-American Activities?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes; I gave the FBI pretty much the same information in January of 1951. Or should I spell it out, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Mr. VELDE. Mr. Roberts, during the time you were a member of the Communist Party, did you have an impression or idea that the policies of the American Communist Party were being directed by the Comintern in Soviet Russia?

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Velde, in all honesty, my activity was so specialized that it would be impossible for me to know this. I did not attend, as most people in Hollywood, any lecture sessions. I have no knowledge of Marxism or a very small knowledge of it, and I never attended discussion groups at all. Most of us were bored with that.

Mr. VELDE. Do you think that same is true of the average member of your particular group?

Mr. ROBERTS. I would say, in the case of most of the people I know, yes, they have absolutely no knowledge of what they were doing. It was a place to discuss labor conditions, of working conditions in Hollywood, and as I said originally, it was the way of meeting people at the beginning. It seems a strange way to find a sociable club, but this is pretty much the truth. I had never heard any discussion at all on an international level about a conspiracy or anything. Had I heard that I would have been out in 2 years.

Mr. VELDE. Did the Communist Party or any member thereof assist you in any way in obtaining employment or aiding you in your work?

Mr. ROBERTS. I don't think they were ever in a position to do that. I don't know of any such case, not only apart from myself.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you have any personal opportunity to observe the use that the Communists made of front organizations, generally?

Mr. ROBERTS. Well, the procedure is very much the same, I would say. The idea is either to start on a neighborhood level or an artistic level. If you can find five writers who have a cause, to send in two or three Communists would be the first thing, rally them in terms of the cause. I will try and think of one. I am sure there are many.

Let us say the question of credits throughout the guild, or a question of writers' working conditions, or anything of this kind. They will form writers who are interested in the question of writers' credits generally, no more; but this now constitutes a nucleus from which to draw membership to the Communist Party. It constitutes a chance to accumulate funds, because where this money goes nobody ever seems to know. And it also doesn't prevent them from changing, well, the American Peace Mobilization to the American People's Mobilization. They have changed the name many times on many organizations. The organization could be started with one reason and finish with an entirely different reason for being if it suited the Communist Party.

Mr. TAVENNER. I omitted to ask you about the payment of dues.

Mr. ROBERTS. Since I wasn't working during the time I was a member, or a great deal of it, all I ever paid was 10 cents a week, no more, no less.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were you at any time a member of the League of American Writers?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, I was, Mr. Tavenner. This is all the way back in 1938 or 1939. I am sorry I omitted this detail. I was asked to join the board of the League of American Writers to promote cultural relations between writers of all nations.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who invited you to join the organization?

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. and Mrs. D'Usseau. I served on the board and didn't understand what they were getting at. I attended possibly one or two meetings, including one at the Pig and Whistle Restaurant, which is an open restaurant, in the main room, and at the end of a few meetings I quit the league entirely. But it is on this basis that Mr. Rinaldo felt that I was right in terms of joining the party.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then that is a direct example, in your own case, of the use of Communist-front organizations to recruit members?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes. I am sorry I didn't see the first implications of what I said.

Mr. TAVENNER. Have you given the committee the benefit of all of the information you have relating to Communist Party membership of persons in the entertainment field?

Mr. ROBERTS. To the best of my ability, to the best of my recollection; yes sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. Have you any other information you would like to add or give to the committee?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes. I would like to suggest two things, if I may, and I may be very presumptuous to do this. I would like to see the Communist Party outlawed. I would like to see it made completely illegal

in language almost that simple. I think in the meantime, before such legislation can be prepared adequately—by the way, one of the things that I never understood is that such legislation would cause the party to go underground. The party seems to be so far underground now that I don't see what difference the legislation would make. Where they are, I don't know.

The second suggestion I might make would be to check very closely the cores of all Communist-front organizations, and I think if this is done it will be a great protection to people who have been fooled repeatedly, I may add, not just once.

Mr. TAVENNER. In other words, that is the contribution this committee can make by way of disclosure of the activity of these people in front organizations?

Mr. ROBERTS. I think they would lose their membership. I believed Mr. Odets this morning when he said he did not know what the real make-up of ASP<sup>1</sup> is. Three-quarters of the membership hasn't the faintest idea of who is the one behind it, who makes up the pamphlets that are sent out of this type.

Mr. TAVENNER. I have no further questions.

Mr. WOOD. I desire to express to you, Mr. Roberts, our appreciation for you coming in here, and the information you have given us, and also for the suggestions which you made to this committee.

This committee, for the time since I have been a member of it, has given some rather close study to the question of outlawing the Communist Party, as such, and we have also spent a great deal of time, as you say, to find out the hard core of these various Communist fronts.

We thank you for the valuable consideration you have made to our efforts, and you are entitled to our sincere thanks, and I extend it to you on behalf of the committee.

Mr. ROBERTS. Thank you, very much.

Mr. WOOD. With that, you may be excused from further appearance.

The committee will stand in recess until 10:30 in the morning.

(Whereupon, at 4 p. m., Tuesday, May 20, 1952, the hearing was recessed, to reconvene at 10:30 a. m., Wednesday, May 21, 1952.)

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<sup>1</sup> Southern California chapter of the National Council of the Arts, Sciences and Professions, known more familiarly as the Hollywood Arts, Sciences and Professions Council or the ASP.



# COMMUNIST INFILTRATION OF THE HOLLYWOOD MOTION-PICTURE INDUSTRY—PART 8

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 1952

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES,  
*Washington, D. C.*

## PUBLIC HEARING

A subcommittee on the Committee on Un-American Activities met, pursuant to recess, at 11 a. m., in room 226, Old House Office Building, Hon. John S. Wood, chairman, presiding.

Committee members present: Representative John S. Wood and Francis E. Walter.

Staff members present: Frank S. Tavenner, Jr., counsel; Thomas W. Beale, Sr., assistant counsel; John W. Carrington, clerk; Raphael I. Nixon, research director; and A. S. Poore, editor.

Mr. Wood. The committee will come to order. Let the record show that for the purpose of the hearing I as chairman have set up a subcommittee consisting of Mr. Walter and myself.

Who do you have?

Mr. TAVENNER. Miss Lillian Hellman.

Mr. Wood. Will you raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear the evidence you will give to this subcommittee shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Miss HELLMAN. I do.

## TESTIMONY OF MISS LILLIAN HELLMAN, ACCOMPANIED BY HER COUNSEL, JOSEPH L. RAUH, JR.

Mr. Wood. Are you represented by counsel?

Miss HELLMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. Wood. Counsel will please identify himself for the record.

Mr. RAUH. My name is Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., 1631 K Street.

Mr. Wood. In Washington?

Mr. RAUH. Washington, D. C.; yes, sir.

Mr. Wood. Thank you, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. You are Miss Lillian Hellman?

Miss HELLMAN. Yes, I am.

Mr. TAVENNER. Where were you born?

Miss HELLMAN. I was born in New Orleans, La., in June 1905.

Mr. TAVENNER. Where do you now reside?

Miss HELLMAN. I reside at 63 East Eighty-second Street, New York City.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you give to the committee, please, in a general way, what your educational training has been, formal educational training?

Miss HELLMAN. Yes. I went to public schools in New Orleans, La., and in New York City. I went to New York University and Columbia University.

Mr. TAVENNER. What is your occupation?

Miss HELLMAN. I am a writer; a playwright.

Mr. TAVENNER. How long have you been a playwright?

Miss HELLMAN. Since about 1933.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you tell the committee, please, what some of the principal productions have been, that is, your productions as a playwright?

Miss HELLMAN. Not a full list, just some?

Mr. TAVENNER. Some of the most prominent.

Miss HELLMAN. The Children's Hour, The Little Foxes, Watch On The Rhine, Another Part of the Forest, The Autumn Garden, The Searching Wind.

Mr. TAVENNER. Where have you engaged in the practice of your profession?

Miss HELLMAN. In the practice of playwriting in New York City, principally.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, were you not located in Hollywood for a while?

Miss HELLMAN. Yes, sir. I have done screen writing, a great deal of it.

Mr. TAVENNER. Over what period of time?

Miss HELLMAN. From about the beginning of 1935 through about 1945, and one short job since then.

Mr. TAVENNER. When was the work that you say was a short job since then; when was that done?

Miss HELLMAN. I think in about 1948 or 1949.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the title?

Miss HELLMAN. It wasn't a title. I went out to California to work for 2 weeks to do a so-called 10-page treatment on Streetcar Named Desire, which the producer, the owner at that point, wished to submit to the Breen office. In other words, I did not do a script, I simply did a suggestion for Mr. Breen.

Mr. TAVENNER. For what studios have you worked?

Miss HELLMAN. I have worked mostly for Samuel Goldwyn, for whom I worked off and on for 10 years. I also did a picture for Warner Bros., and The Searching Wind was produced by Mr. Hal Wallace of Paramount Pictures.

Mr. TAVENNER. What do you consider the major screen credits which you have received for your work in Hollywood?

Miss HELLMAN. An adaptation of my own play The Children's Hour, which was called These Three, a picture called The Dark Angel. I did the screen play of my own play The Little Foxes. I edited the screen play of my own play Watch on the Rhine. I did the screen play of my own play Searching Wind. I worked for short periods on other pictures. But those are the major ones.

Mr. TAVENNER. When did you go to Hollywood?

Miss HELLMAN. I went first in 1930 and worked at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer as a reader and translator, reader chiefly. I went back in

1935, I think, to the first screen-writing job. I also did a picture called *Dead End*, which I had forgotten.

MR. TAVENNER. How long did you remain in Hollywood when you were there in 1935?

MISS HELLMAN. I couldn't say, Mr. Tavenner. I would think it was a period of 4 or 5 months.

MR. TAVENNER. And what was the occasion of your next trip to Hollywood?

MISS HELLMAN. I think my own play, *The Children's Hour*, which would have been 1936. I am not certain of these dates.

MR. TAVENNER. How long did you remain in 1936 in Hollywood?

MISS HELLMAN. I think about the same period off and on. I never really lived in Hollywood. I would live 2 or 3 months and then come back for a month or two. I think the longest period I ever lived was about 6 months or 7 months, which was 1937 or 1938.

MR. TAVENNER. You were there in 1937 and 1938, did you say?

MISS HELLMAN. Off and on; yes.

MR. TAVENNER. And I believe you said that you were there for longer periods of time during 1937 and 1938 than any other time.

MISS HELLMAN. Yes; I think so.

MR. TAVENNER. Do you recall what time of the year you were in Hollywood in 1937?

MISS HELLMAN. I would think it would be winter and spring, because I went to Europe, I think, in the summer of 1937.

MR. TAVENNER. In other words, from the early part of 1937 through to the end of the year with the exception of the period in between, during the summer, when you went abroad, is that what you mean?

MISS HELLMAN. No, sir; I don't mean with the exception. I meant that I would have been there in the winter and spring of 1937. I left to go to Europe in, I think July or August of 1937, and I don't think I went back to Hollywood until 1938 again.

MR. TAVENNER. And how long did you remain there when you returned in 1938?

MISS HELLMAN. I couldn't say. I don't remember. It probably was 3 or 4 months. My periods of working on scripts have never been living in Hollywood. I frequently did scripts in New York City and went out in the middle or went out at the end.

MR. TAVENNER. From 1938 on to the completion of your work in Hollywood, how frequently were you there, do you think?

MISS HELLMAN. I don't really think I could answer. I would have to remember what picture I was doing, and I don't remember what picture I was doing. I think it was a picture called *Dead End*, but I am not certain. It would have never been—I would have doubted if it was ever a period of longer than 4 months. It may have been twice.

MR. TAVENNER. In the course of your visits to Hollywood, did you become acquainted with Martin Berkeley?

MISS HELLMAN. I must refuse to answer, Mr. Tavenner, on the ground it might incriminate me.

MR. TAVENNER. Let me ask you again, because I am not certain that my recollection is clear about it. You stated that in the summer of 1937 you went abroad?

MISS HELLMAN. Yes, sir.

MR. TAVENNER. What month?

MISS HELLMAN. I think it was August.



Mr. TAVENNER. In August. And you left from Hollywood to engage on your trip abroad?

Miss HELLMAN. No. I had an apartment in New York. I have always had a residence in New York. I came back, as I remember, for 2 or 3 weeks, 4 weeks perhaps, and then went to Europe.

Mr. TAVENNER. But you may have been back in New York for 3 or 4 weeks prior to your leaving in August?

Miss HELLMAN. Yes, I think so.

Mr. TAVENNER. Miss Hellman, during the course of the hearings in California in September 1951, Mr. Martin Berkeley testified regarding the holding of a meeting of members of the Communist Party in June of 1937 at his home. This appeared, according to his testimony, to have been one of the early organizational meetings of the Communist Party in Hollywood. I want to read you his testimony regarding that meeting:

Mr. TAVENNER. You have spoken of the aims and objectives of the Communist Party generally in this area. I would like you now to tell the committee when and where the Hollywood section of the Communist Party was first organized.

Mr. BERKELEY. Well, sir, by a very strange coincidence the section was organized in my house. From the time I got out here in January, the party grew pretty rapidly. Jerome was working hard, Mike Pell was working hard, Lou Harris was working hard, and all of us were working pretty hard to recruit members. And we felt—you see, at that time there was no real organization, you were a party member but you had no place to go and meet. There were no real groups, there were a few study groups but that is about all.

It was felt that numerically we were strong enough to have our own organization which was called the Hollywood section.

In June of 1937, the middle of June, the meeting was held in my house. My house was picked because I had a large living room and ample parking facilities, it was out on Beverly Glen, which was out in the country, at least in those days, and my lease was up in 2 days. So we had the meeting at my house.

And it was a pretty good meeting. We were honored by the presence of many functionaries from downtown, and the spirit was swell.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you give us the names of those who were in attendance at that meeting, who were members of the Communist Party?

Mr. BERKELEY. Well, in addition to Jerome and the others I have mentioned before, and there is no sense in me going over the list again and again. I would like to get to the newer people, if I may. Eva Shafran, who was then, I believe, the educational director of the county, downtown, and who is now dead.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you spell the name, please?

Mr. BERKELEY. I think it is spelled, the first name is Eva, I think it is spelled S-h-a-f-r-a-n. I am not sure, but I think that is how you spell her name.

Also present was Harry Carlisle, who is now in the process of being deported, for which I am very grateful. He was an English subject. After Stanley Lawrence had stolen what funds there were from the party out here, and to make amends had gone to Spain and gotten himself killed, they sent Harry Carlisle here to conduct Marxist classes. He was at the meeting.

Also at the meeting was Donald Ogden Stewart. His name is spelled Donald Ogden S-t-e-w-a-r-t.

Dorothy Parker, also a writer. Her husband Allen Campbell, C-a-m-p-b-e-l-l; my old friend Dashiell Hammett, who is now in jail in New York for his activities; that very excellent playwright, Lillian Hellman—

And he goes on to name others.

Miss Hellman, in light of that testimony, I want to ask you whether or not you agree that that is a correct statement, and if it is not, wherein it is in error and, if you did attend this meeting as represented and as sworn to by Mr. Berkeley, I would then want to ask you regarding the activities of any other persons who were there.

First of all, I will ask you the question, is that statement true?

MISS HELLMAN. I would very much like to discuss this with you, Mr. TAVENNER, and I would like at this point to refer you to my letter. I have every desire to discuss this with you. To be fair to myself I think I have worked very hard over this letter, and most seriously. I would like to ask you once again to reconsider what I have said in the letter.

MR. TAVENNER. In other words, you are asking the committee not to ask you any questions regarding the participation of other persons in the Communist Party activities?

MISS HELLMAN. I don't think I said that, Mr. TAVENNER.

MR. WOOD. In order to clarify the record, Mr. Counsel, at this point would it be wise to put into the record at this point the correspondence that has been had between the witness and me as chairman of the committee, pertaining to her letter.

MR. TAVENNER. Yes, sir. I have here the letter of Miss Hellman, addressed to the chairman, May 19, 1952, and a copy of the reply by the chairman of May 20, 1952, which I produce and ask to be made a part of the record as Hellman exhibit No. 1. That will be 1 and 2.

(Documents referred to marked "Helman Exhibits Nos. 1 and 2" and filed for the record.)

MR. TAVENNER. I notice the press is passing around copies. Are those copies being disseminated by you?

MR. RAUH. By me, Mr. TAVENNER. I thought you had accepted them in the record and that was proper. I am sorry if I had done anything that was not proper.

MR. TAVENNER. Not at all. I was just interested to know whether you were prepared to do that before you came here.

MR. RAUH. We had to have the copies, Mr. TAVENNER. If you had not put them in the record I would not have done it. I thought it was proper once you made it a part of the record.

MR. TAVENNER. There is no objection to that.

MR. WOOD. I might state in that connection, Mr. Counsel, for the purpose of suggesting that the correspondence be placed in the record, it is in my view that in the function of this committee we cannot be placed in the attitude of trading with the witnesses as to what they will testify to, and that is the substance of my reply which is in the record and which I think should be read publicly now, in view of the fact that the witness has been circulating them among the press.

MR. TAVENNER. The letter by Miss Hellman reads as follows:

DEAR MR. WOOD: As you know, I am under subpoena to appear before your committee on May 21, 1952.

I am most willing to answer all questions about myself. I have nothing to hide from your committee and there is nothing in my life of which I am ashamed. I have been advised by counsel that under the fifth amendment I have a constitutional privilege to decline to answer any questions about my political opinions, activities, and associations, on the grounds of self-incrimination. I do not wish to claim this privilege. I am ready and willing to testify before the representatives of our Government as to my own opinions and my own actions, regardless of any risks or consequences to myself.

But I am advised by counsel that if I answer the committee's questions about myself, I must also answer questions about other people and that if I refuse to do so, I can be cited for contempt. My counsel tells me that if I answer questions about myself, I will have waived my rights under the fifth amendment and could be forced legally to answer questions about others. This is very difficult for a layman to understand. But there is one principle that I do understand: I am not willing, now or in the future, to bring bad trouble to people who, in my past

association with them, were completely innocent of any talk or any action that was disloyal or subversive. I do not like subversion or disloyalty in any form and if I had ever seen any I would have considered it my duty to have reported it to the proper authorities. But to hurt innocent people whom I knew many years ago in order to save myself is, to me inhuman and indecent and dishonorable. I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashions, even though I long ago came to the conclusion that I was not a political person and could have no comfortable place in any political group.

I was raised in an old-fashioned American tradition and there were certain homely things that were taught to me: To try to tell the truth, not to bear false witness, not to harm my neighbor, to be loyal to my country, and so on. In general, I respected these ideals of Christian honor and did as well with them as I knew how. It is my belief that you will agree with these simple rules of human decency and will not expect me to violate the good American tradition from which they spring. I would, therefore, like to come before you and speak of myself.

I am prepared to waive the privilege against self-incrimination and to tell you everything you wish to know about my views or actions if your committee will agree to refrain from asking me to name other people. If the committee is unwilling to give me this assurance, I will be forced to plead the privilege of the fifth amendment at the hearing.

A reply to this letter would be appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

LILLIAN HELLMAN.

The answer to the letter is as follows:

DEAR MISS HELLMAN: Reference is made to your letter dated May 19, 1952, wherein you indicate that in the event the committee asks you questions regarding your association with other individuals you will be compelled to rely upon the fifth amendment in giving your answers to the committee questions.

In this connection, please be advised that the committee cannot permit witnesses to set forth the terms under which they will testify.

We have in the past secured a great deal of information from persons in the entertainment profession who cooperated wholeheartedly with the committee. The committee appreciates any information furnished it by persons who have been members of the Communist Party. The committee, of course, realizes that a great number of persons who were members of the Communist Party at one time honestly felt that it was not a subversive organization. However, on the other hand, it should be pointed out that the contributions made to the Communist Party as a whole by persons who were not themselves subversive made it possible for those members of the Communist Party who were and still are subversives to carry on their work.

The committee has endeavored to furnish a hearing to each person identified as a Communist engaged in work in the entertainment field in order that the record could be made clear as to whether they were still members of the Communist Party. Any persons identified by you during the course of committee hearings will be afforded the opportunity of appearing before the committee in accordance with the policy of the committee.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN S. WOOD, *Chairman.*

Now, the question was asked you of whether or not you attended this organizational meeting of the Communist Party that was described by Mr. Martin Berkeley.

MISS HELLMAN. I must refuse to answer, on the ground that it might incriminate me.

MR. WOOD. You might refuse to answer it. The question is asked, do you refuse.

MISS HELLMAN. I am sorry, I refuse to answer on the ground that it might incriminate me.

MR. TAVENNER. I desire to continue to read additional testimony as given by Mr. Berkeley.



Mr. TAVENNER. Did you later obtain information that some of these individuals were made members of the Communist Party at large?

Mr. BERKELEY. I did, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. Which of these persons whom you have named became members at large of the Communist Party?

Mr. BERKELEY. Well, I have to put it this way, sir. After this meeting I never saw Stewart or Parker or Campbell or Hammett or Hellman at a party meeting. They were at that meeting at my house and I spoke to Jerome and Lawson at a subsequent date and I asked them where Stewart and Dash were—I was very fond of Dash Hammett—and he said that they had been assigned to a group known as party members at large. They were no longer assigned to any particular group in the Hollywood section and that I had seen the last of them as far as organizational matters were concerned. I imagine right now they wish they hadn't come in the first place.

There are throughout the country those who are members at large of the Communist Party.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you repeat that, please.

Mr. BERKELEY. I said throughout the country, in addition to these I have already mentioned, there are many other people who are members at large of the Communist Party. That is very important to the party to have these members at large.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you tell the committee what you mean by member at large, or what the Communist Party meant by the expression or by the designation "Member at large"?

Mr. BERKELEY. Well, if you are pretty important and you don't want to be exposed—Well, suppose Congressman Jackson here decided to become a Communist, God forbid.

Mr. JACKSON. Would you pick somebody else, please?

Mr. BERKELEY. It would be pretty important that no one knew that such was the case, and the party would probably not issue a formal book. You would take your oath to the Communist Party, you would pay your dues to the Communist Party, you would take your directives from the Communist Party, and you would function as you were told to function, but you would not go to meetings with other Congressmen or—

that is the way it is written—

or other writers, or other members of the top echelon in the trade unions or the arts. From time to time you might meet with a man like—I am sure these five writers I have mentioned as members at large, they undoubtedly met out here in secret with John Howard Lawson or in New York with V. J. Jerome or a gentleman called Brown, who is a member, or who was then a member of the Politburo of the party. You would meet with these people and get your directions and instructions from the party and function, but you would have no contact with anybody else in the party for your protection and for the protection of the party and the collection of dues.

Were you at any time a member at large of the Communist Party?

Miss HELLMAN. I refuse to answer, Mr. Tavenner, on the same grounds.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were you acquainted with V. J. Jerome?

Miss HELLMAN. I refuse to answer on the same grounds.

Mr. TAVENNER. John Howard Lawson?

Miss HELLMAN. I refuse to answer on the same grounds.

Mr. TAVENNER. Are you now a member of the Communist Party?

Miss HELLMAN. No, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were you ever a member of the Communist Party?

Miss HELLMAN. I refuse to answer, Mr. Tavenner, on the same grounds.

Mr. WOOD. See if we can be of mutual assistance to each other. You testified that you are not now a member of the Communist Party. On the grounds of possible self-incrimination you have declined to answer whether you were ever a member.

Miss HELLMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. WOOD. What I would like to know is can you fix a date, a period of time in the immediate past, during which you are willing to testify that you have not been a member of the Communist Party?

Miss HELLMAN. I refuse to answer, Mr. Wood, on the same grounds.

Mr. WOOD. Were you yesterday?

Miss HELLMAN. No, sir.

Mr. WOOD. Were you last year at this time?

Miss HELLMAN. No, sir.

Mr. WOOD. Were you 5 years ago at this time?

Miss HELLMAN. I must refuse to answer.

Mr. WOOD. Were you 2 years ago from this time?

Miss HELLMAN. No, sir.

Mr. WOOD. Three years ago from this time?

Miss HELLMAN. I must refuse to answer on the same grounds.

Mr. WOOD. You say you must refuse. Do you refuse to answer whether you were 3 years ago?

Miss HELLMAN. I am so sorry, I forget. I certainly don't mean to forget.

Mr. WALTER. Were you a member of the Communist Party in the middle of June 1937?

Miss HELLMAN. I refuse to answer, Mr. Walter, on the same ground.

Mr. WALTER. As I remember the letter that was read—your letter to the chairman—you didn't want to testify because you were afraid that you might bring bad trouble to people whose names might be mentioned in connection with your testimony. In view of the fact that Martin Berkeley has already admitted that he was a member of the Communist Party, what bad trouble do you think you would bring to him if you were to admit that you attended the meeting at his home?

Miss HELLMAN. I must stand by the letter, Mr. Walter. I have worked very hard on it, and I tried very hard to explain exactly what I meant by it. I must refer back to it at this point.

Mr. WALTER. Yes, I think I understand that perfectly. But the principal reason why you do not want to testify is because you do not want to bring, to quote you, bad trouble to other people. Martin Berkeley has already admitted that he was a member of the Communist Party. You decline to answer the question of whether or not you attended a meeting at his home. What bad trouble could you bring to him if you would mention his name?

Miss HELLMAN. Since I don't quite understand, may I speak with my counsel?

Mr. WALTER. Yes.

(Witness conferred with her counsel.)

Miss HELLMAN. Because I didn't understand that that was the principle reason and because I don't understand the legalities, may I refer you to Mr. Rauh. I didn't really understand the question. I would prefer Mr. Rauh answer it if it is possible.

Mr. WALTER. No; I am not interested in that. I know about what he would say.

Mr. TAVENNER. On February 12, 1948, the National Institute of Arts and Letters addressed a letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives protesting the investigation of the Communist infiltration of the motion-picture industry as a subversion of the traditional American sense of fair play and human decency. Your name

appears as having been signed to this letter. That is February 12, 1948. Were you a member of the Communist Party at that time?

Miss HELLMAN. I refuse to answer, Mr. Tavenner, on the same ground.

Mr. TAVENNER. You have stated in answer to a question from one of the members of the committee that 3 years ago you were not a member of the Communist Party, if I understood you correctly.

Mr. RAUH. I am sorry, Mr. Tavenner.

Mr. TAVENNER. Two years ago. But you refused to answer as to whether you were a member of the Communist Party 3 years ago. There is one great advantage between those two periods which is uppermost in my mind, and I want to ask you whether it has any bearing or significance with respect to your answer. The Korean episode began in 1950. Does that have any bearing upon your answer as to the time in which you were willing to testify you were not a member of the Communist Party?

Miss HELLMAN. No, sir; I don't think so.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, what event, if any, occurred which makes you willing to testify that you were not a member of the Communist Party 2 years ago?

Miss HELLMAN. I must refuse to answer that, Mr. Tavenner, on the same grounds.

Mr. WOOD. You are still not under any compulsion.

Miss HELLMAN. I am very sorry, Mr. Wood. It is a way of talking, I suppose. It is rather hard to cure myself.

Mr. WOOD. But I cannot let it stay in the record that you are under any compulsion.

Miss HELLMAN. I am sorry, I will try very hard not to do it.

Mr. TAVENNER. Your answer, then, is that you decline to answer on a constitutional ground, the fifth amendment in particular.

Miss HELLMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you ever pay Communist Party dues?

Miss HELLMAN. I refuse to answer, Mr. Tavenner, on the same grounds.

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Chairman, I do not believe that pursuing the question further would be of any particular help to the committee. I have no further questions.

Mr. WOOD. Mr. Walter does not desire to ask the witness any further questions. Is there any reason why this witness should not be excused from further attendance before the committee?

Mr. TAVENNER. No, sir.

Mr. WOOD. Do you have a second witness for the day?

Mr. TAVENNER. No, sir.

Mr. WOOD. The committee will stand in recess until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, at 11:37 a. m., the committee recessed, to reconvene at 10 a. m., Thursday, May 22, 1952.)













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